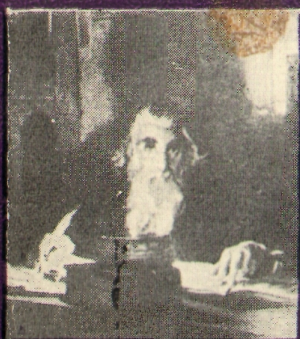
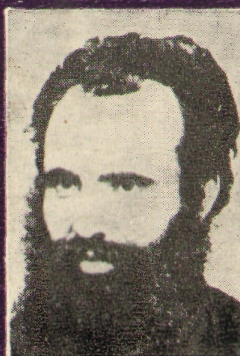




SOME GREAT BULGARIANS



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FOREWORD

Bulgaria, that ancient land in South-East Europe, can boast of an eventful history which has lasted for 13 centuries. Having settled in one of Europe's most troubled spots, a place constantly harassed by the conflicting interests of the great powers, the Bulgarians lived through centuries of greatness and prosperity, of ruin, bondage and decay.

The foundations of the Bulgarian state were laid in North-East Bulgaria in 680. During the Middle Ages, the Bulgarian nation was to play an important part in the history of South-East Europe and the life of the Slav nations. It was to become the chief rival of the Byzantine Empire and a powerful centre of unity for the Southern Slavs. Bulgaria adopted Christianity as early as the 9th century, and affiliated herself to the contemporary culture of the time, making her own contribution to the development of mankind.

However, the natural development of the Bulgarian state was severely impeded by the clash with the Byzantine Empire. At the end of the 11th century, Bulgaria fell under Byzantine domination which lasted almost two centuries and went through the first of a series of severe trials.

Restored in 1186, the Bulgarian state rapidly recovered its military power, political influence and cultural traditions, becoming once more an important factor on the European continent. In the 14th century, however, when the first seeds of the Renaissance had been sown in Western Europe, and had already ripened in Bulgaria, the Ottoman hordes invaded the Balkans, and established a rule which was to last for many centuries, thwarting the historical development of the Balkan peoples.

It was the Bulgarians and their neighbours who halted the Ottoman advance on Europe at the price of their freedom and independence, thus saving European civilization from the surging wave of Asiatic barbarity. Bulgaria was under foreign rule for almost five centuries. The martial-feudal system of the Ottoman Turks was imposed upon her, and her ancient culture fell into ruin. Bulgaria's palaces, churches and libraries were plundered and destroyed. The once-flourishing towns were razed to the ground. The people, deprived of their aristocracy and intelligentsia, were turned into serfs, losing all civic rights. Over the centuries the Bulgarians lived in ignorance, subjected to unrelenting social and spiritual oppression.

Towards the 18th century, the Ottoman feudal system began to decay. Turkey had already exhausted her strength as a mighty military empire. Her economy had already been drawn into the turnover of European trade. The capitalist way of life and the new, invigorating ideas of the bourgeois era struck roots in our country, as well. New social forces were generated, which propagated the idea of a national liberation struggle. The period of the Bulgarian National Revival had begun. In about a century, Bulgaria adapted herself to the bourgeois society. She created a new economic culture of her own, restored the life of her towns and, having won the reputation of a first-rate economic power in the empire, began to trade with Europe.

Economic progress and the new national-bourgeois ideas had a favourable impact on the development of culture and education. The 19th century was marked by a powerful secular educational movement. Bulgarian literature and art, architecture, music and painting were reborn and a new theatre emerged. The struggle for a free church began, a struggle waged against the Patriarchate of Constantinople, which had been granted the right to dictate the affairs of the Bulgarian church in the 15th century. As the result of a powerful national movement, the Bulgarians succeeded in freeing their church from the domination of Constantinople in 1870. Two years later, the Bulgarian Exarchate was founded.

This cultural and political renaissance accelerated the process of the formation of the Bulgarian nation, which was more or less completed by the beginning of the 1870s.

This spiritual rebirth and surge of national feeling also gave rise to a nation-wide drive for political freedom and self-determination. In the first half of the 19th century the Bulgarians took

up arms, though unsuccessfully, in the struggle for their own national independence and in aiding other Balkan and European peoples in their liberation struggles. After the Crimean War (1854-1856), these struggles for national liberation entered their final and decisive phase. Strong revolutionary organizations were created. The "Bulgarian question" formed the basis of the so-called "Eastern question" which, in the 1870s developed into a chronic international crisis. The most important manifestation of this drive for national independence was the April Uprising of 1876, when the Bulgarians shed rivers of blood in order to declare to the world that they could no longer live as slaves.

The April Uprising brought the state of affairs in Bulgaria to the attention of the governments and the peoples of Europe. Some of the most enlightened minds of the 19th century, such as Victor Hugo, Garibaldi, Mazzini, D. Dostoevsky and Turgenev raised their voices in defence of the Bulgarian people. Their humanitarian appeals forced diplomacy to try to find a solution to the problem. The conference of the Great Powers, which took place in Constantinople at the end of 1876 and the beginning of 1877, announced its decision that Bulgaria should have autonomy within the Ottoman Empire.

Several months later, Russia declared war on Turkey, as a result of which the Bulgarian people's centuries-old dream of freedom was realized.

However, the ideals of the leaders of the Bulgarian National Revival movement were not to be completely realized historically. The military solution of the "Bulgarian question" and the painfully-won freedom and independence provoked the intervention of the Great Powers. Bulgaria was again plundered and divided. The Berlin Congress of 1878 returned territories which had been populated with Bulgarians for centuries to Turkey.

The new Bulgarian state was forced to begin its existence beneath the shadow of a fatal historical predetermination. It had to make up for centuries of backwardness as far as its economy, political development and culture were concerned.

Under these conditions, the development of bourgeois society underwent a series of vicissitudes and national crises, wars and pogroms. For a period of almost 60 years, Bulgaria was unable to catch up with the developed countries of Europe and unable to solve the problems that had remained as a legacy of the past.

It was in 1944 that a socialist revolution took place in Bulgaria. Democratic people's rule was established with the decisive participation of the Soviet Army, and Bulgaria began to develop along socialist lines.

Radical changes both in the economy, political structure and culture of the country have taken place over the last twenty-five years. The most important result of Bulgaria's development after the Second World War can be seen in the victory of socialist methods of production.

In twenty-five years, Bulgaria attained considerable successes both as far as her economic and her cultural development were concerned. As a result of the heroic efforts of her people led by the Communist Party, Bulgaria has been transformed from a backward agricultural country into a prosperous industrial and agricultural republic with a modern industry, a highly-mechanized agricultural system, and a flourishing national culture.

In this way Bulgaria, aided by the Soviet Union, has attained international prestige and now plays an important role in the propagation of peace and progress in South-East Europe.

This is a brief summary of the more important events in Bulgaria's thirteen centuries of history.

We should like to give some idea of the progress of Bulgaria's dramatic and eventful history with the names and deeds of the first rulers of the Bulgarian state, and the creators of our national culture. We consider that these leaders of our nation express the historical demands of the various eras, that they are a loftier manifestation of the Bulgarian national spirit, and should like to acquaint readers with some of their more notable achievements, and the modest contribution which the Bulgarians have made to the development of human culture. Our authors hope that in this way they will be able to reveal something of Bulgaria's old desire for social and cultural progress throughout the centuries.

KHAN ASPAROUH

"In the time of Constantine the Bearded the Sixth Oecumenical Council took place. And in the time of this Emperor Constantine, the Bulgarians crossed the Danube and, having defeated them, took from the Greeks this land, in which they live to this day.'

From the *Chronicle of Manasses*,
14th century

Bulgaria has existed for thirteen centuries. Her long history which is filled with drama and greatness has known both the radiance of victory and the bitterness of defeat. Her dazzling successes were followed by periods of great trials. Bulgaria has twice been obliterated from the political map of Europe, and centuries later, has arisen from the ashes.

As we search for traces of those who laid the foundations of the Bulgarian state through the twilight of the centuries, we are confronted with the majestic image of Asparouh — the founder of the Bulgarian state. This was a barbarian leader who possessed both the valour of a great military leader and the wisdom of a statesman. This first Bulgarian khan also possessed another quality — foresight which almost bordered on prophecy. In an era when events developed with the speed of lightning, and security did not exist even as a conception, he founded a state in Europe's most troubled spot, a state which survived all the vicissitudes of fate and produced a tough and unbending nation.

It was the seventh century. Over the last three centuries, the broad steppes between the Caspian Sea and Asia had seen wave after wave of barbarians racing towards Europe in search of booty and riches or even a moment of peace and quiet. They first came to South-East Europe, which had long belonged to that part of the Roman Empire which is referred to as Byzantium. It was the lands of Byzantium for which this seemingly endless barbarian wave always headed. Huns, Goths, Avars and many other tribes entered the Empire sometimes as enemies, and sometimes as allies against other barbarians. Their presence there, however, was just a fleeting moment in history. They either moved on westwards, caught up in the chaos of events, or were driven back to Asia, their birthplace, by the Byzantine troops. They left ruins behind them, but their traces in the history of South-East Europe were quickly erased.

It was like this until the Slavs arrived. Their settling in the Balkan Peninsula is the pre-history of Bulgaria. They reached the north bank of the Danube in the first decades of the 6th century, and began stubbornly and methodically to invade the Balkan provinces of Byzantium. At the beginning, they came in search of plunder, but the purpose of their invasions soon changed. Huge numbers of them crossed the Danube and settled there permanently. The Slavs penetrated to the southernmost parts of the peninsula, Chalcidice and the Peloponese. In the words of one Byzantine, the whole European part of the Empire became Slav. The local inhabitants, Romanized or Hellenized descendants of the ancient Thracians, received the newcomers if not with open arms, at least without hostility, because they protected them from the all-embracing demands of the Emperor's treasury and brought the freedom of a society which had not yet outlived tribalism. After a comparatively short period, most of the descendants of the Thracians had merged with the overwhelming number of Slavs, passing on to them a considerable part of their material and spiritual culture.

Byzantium sent all her forces against the uninvited guests. She was conscious of the fact that it was al-

ready impossible to drive them back to their old lands beyond the Danube and was attempting to gain an advantage from the ill fortune that had befallen her. The Empire made a great effort to gain power over its own territories and to subjugate the newcomers in order to turn them into docile tax-payers and loyal subjects of Byzantium. The Slavs, however, had a strong desire for independence. A long and bloody struggle between them and the Byzantines began and this stimulated the formation of a state by the Slav tribes, a process which had already begun. By the middle of the 7th century, powerful military tribal units had been established in those areas of the Balkan Peninsula where pressure from the Byzantines was at its strongest. Many tribal unions sprang up in the South-West; these were called Slaviniyas by the Byzantines; to the north of the Haemus, the Slavs banded together in a "union of the seven Slav tribes and the Severi".

Alarmed by them, Byzantium gathered her forces in an effort to destroy these dangerous alliances. She sent an enormous army against the Slaviniyas, and after a fierce battle, succeeded in restoring her power in these regions. The same tragic end awaited the tribal union on the banks of the Danube. It was at this critical moment, which was to decide the fate of the Southern Slavs, that the Proto-Bulgarians, led by Khan Asparouh, came to the lands to the north of the Danube, somewhere near the delta.

Asparouh and his tribe had travelled a long way. He had set out from the banks of the River Dnieper, in the valley of the River Kuban. The Proto-Bulgarians had memories of a great past, and in the second half of the 7th century, already had an interesting and dramatic history. Their leader, Khan Asparouh, came from the ruling Proto-Bulgarian family of the Doulo, whose ancestor was thought to be Attila himself; some of the Proto-Bulgarian tribes, which had been drawn into the Hun advance, had spent a considerable amount of time with this union of many tribes, which historians refer to as the Hunnic Union. When this union broke up after the death of Attila, most of the Proto-Bulgarians re-

turned to their lands around the Kuban where their fellow-tribesmen lived. Their fate, however, was not a happy one. New conquerors came from the East — the west Turkic tribe of Sildjibu — and they included the lands of the Proto-Bulgarians in their huge khanate. The large numbers of Proto-Bulgarians and related tribes began a long and heroic campaign of resistance. A mass uprising finished in utter defeat. In the 630s, however, the struggles of the Proto-Bulgarians were crowned with victory. They freed themselves from the rule of the Western Turks. The prolonged struggle against the foreign oppressor stimulated their social development to a great extent. Many ethnic groups banded together in a large military-tribal union referred to by Byzantine chroniclers as "Great Bulgaria". The leader of this "Great Bulgaria" was Koubrat, ruler of the Ounogoundour tribe. He led the battle against the Western Turks and then, breaking the resistance of a large number of tribes, expanded the territories of the union over a very large area. Its population, however, was composed of different tribes and spoke different languages and, as is usual in such cases, the history of this union was a short one. "Great Bulgaria", which had achieved brilliant military successes, and had even been officially recognized by Byzantium (an honour accorded to very few barbarian unions), withered away after the death of its founder. The far-seeing ruler, who had noticed signs of disintegration while he was still alive, instructed his sons not to separate and to be slaves to none. They did not fulfil their father's last wish, however. Indeed, how could they fulfil it when there was yet another threat to their independence — this time from the Khazars. The blow inflicted on "Great Bulgaria" by the Khazars was a fatal one. The union was destroyed and the population dispersed in different directions, led by the recalcitrant sons of Koubrat where different fates awaited them. The eldest son, Batbayan, was too weak to resist and subordinated himself to the invaders. The tribes which he led accepted the rule of the Khazars and lived under the domination of the kha-

nate. The name by which they are known in history — the Black Bulgarians — is indicative of their fate.

The younger son of Khan Koubrat, Kotrag, realized that he could not compare his own strength with that of the Khazars, but did not wish to become a slave. He led his Proto-Bulgarian tribe towards the source of the Volga, and settled in the upper reaches of the great river. These Proto-Bulgarians founded Volgan Bulgaria, which was well-known in the Middle Ages.

The third part of the population of "Great Bulgaria", the Ounogoundouri, was led by the youngest of Koubrat's sons, Asparouh. The Ounogoundouri were the first to be struck by the Khazars, and it was here that their leader's capacities as a ruler became apparent. He did not bow before the conquerors and did not leave his native steppes without a struggle. His attempt to rout the Khazars, however, was unsuccessful. The tribe slowly and carefully retreated westwards, pursued by large numbers of Khazars horsemen. This was the start of the long road taken by Asparouh's Proto-Bulgarians from the River Kuban to the mouth of the Danube in search of a peaceful life. In the 670s, they settled in the Ongul district. This seemed to be an ideal place which, with its luxuriant forests and many rivers and streams, would offer peace and quiet to the tribe, exhausted by the long journey and fierce battles. Peace and quiet, however, were impossible in the turbulent seventh century. They had left the Khazars far behind, but Asparouh and his tribe were now confronted by another enemy no less dangerous than the last — Byzantium. Although engaged in a war with the Persians, the Empire, after its bitter lesson with the Slavs, had to drive away the Proto-Bulgarian settlers. Asparouh, who had been tempered by cruel experience, foresaw the course of future events and concentrated all his forces on preparing to meet the coming attack. An anonymous Bulgarian manuscript of the 11th century, a strange mixture of legends and historical facts, informs us that Asparouh built "a great fortification from the Danube to the sea". This rampart, which stretched from Cherna Voda to Constanța, still bears witness to the military

caution of its creator. It had to stop, or at least to delay, the advance of the Byzantine army, to prevent it from launching, a surprise attack on the small but valiant Proto-Bulgarian tribe. The fortification of the border was an important, but not the most important defensive measure. Asparouh, who knew the fatal result of the independent existence of a small tribe, remembered his father's advice and sought a loyal ally. To the North-East was the Khazar Khanate, a sworn enemy, and his other enemy, Byzantium, was preparing to attack from the South-West. It was then, as many contemporary historians maintain, that the Proto-Bulgarian khan sought an alliance with the Slavs who lived on the other side of the Danube. The Slavs and the Proto-Bulgarians came from different ethnic groups, but were not complete strangers to one another. This was not the first time that their paths had crossed in this vast, chaotic movement of tribes which history refers to as "the great migration of the peoples". A Byzantine chronicler informs us that as early as the end of the 5th century, the Emperor Anastasius was compelled to build the so-called "long wall" from Dekros to Selymbria in order to defend his capital from the attacks of the Slavs and Proto-Bulgarians. Sensing the threat from the Byzantine Empire, the Union of the Seven Tribes and the Severi formed a military alliance with Asparouh's tribe in order to defend their independence. This alliance was the first step towards the Slav-Bulgarian unity which gave birth to the Bulgarian state. At this point we must emphasize the exceptional foresight of Khan Asparouh who having assessed the significance of the Slavs in the history of South-East Europe, offered his hand in friendship and assured the future existence of his small tribe. There are no historical sources to inform us of this first stage of Slav-Bulgarian unity, and data about events in the lands to the north of the Haemus are extremely scarce. Byzantine chroniclers, our only sources, do not mention the very earliest history of the newly-formed alliance. The events that followed, however, tell us that Byzantium kept a constant watch on the situation to the north, and that the significance of the Slav-

Bulgarian alliance soon became clear to them. Having just put an end to a six-year war with the Arab Caliphate. Byzantium organized a new campaign against Asparouh's Proto-Bulgarians. Thousands of troops under the command of Constantine IV himself sailed towards the mouth of the Danube.

The Khan, who was well versed in the wiles of battle, did not fight in the open when confronted by the vast enemy army, for he knew that an open battle could only mean defeat for his small tribe. Asparouh confined his troops in a camp he had prudently fortified and, convinced of the impregnability of his position, patiently awaited a suitable moment to make a lightning attack. Perhaps he was also waiting for his allies, the Slavs. Suddenly, however, there was a change in the situation. The Byzantine troops, unable to break through the Proto-Bulgarian fortifications, had prepared for a long siege. It was quite evident that the war was not to be a short one, and Byzantine chroniclers inform us that the Emperor, who suffered from gout, had a sharp attack of his illness and sailed to Messembria for a cure. Contemporary historians consider that he had had a foreboding of the growing discontent in the army he had misled, and realizing that he was helpless as far as breaking into this Proto-Bulgarian stronghold was concerned, had tried to find a convenient excuse for leaving his troops. The sudden departure of Constantine IV was correctly interpreted by the troops. They thought that the Emperor had taken fright and fled, so deserted their posts and raced towards the ships. The Byzantine army was in a state of chaos.

This was the most decisive moment in Khan Asparouh's life. He quickly assessed the significance of the panic that had seized the Byzantine army, opened the gates of the camp and sent his Proto-Bulgarian horsemen after the enemy, which was fleeing in disorder. The last battle was a short one. Most of the troops were killed; very few of them reached the ships. The victory of the Proto-Bulgarians was complete; Asparouh realized that this was the moment to act and in a rapid series of operations, consolidated the results of his brilliant

success. The Proto-Bulgarian cavalry crossed the Danube and conquered the Byzantine Black Sea coast as far as the Varna fortress.

When the Byzantines rallied after this sudden and bloody defeat and turned their gaze to the North, they saw the newly-emerged Bulgarian state. It covered territories from the Timok to the Black Sea and stretched as far as the Haemus to the South. The year was 680.

Khan Asparouh, the first Bulgarian ruler, showed that he was not only a valiant military leader, but also a wise statesman. He was conscious of the fact that his state, born in the storm of battle, would not be a stable one if he did not consolidate it with rapid tactical manoeuvres. He began to organize the defence of the state, concluding a treaty with his allies, the Slavs. Considering their experience and knowledge of the territory, he entrusted the defence of the southern borders to the Severi tribe, and the Seven Slav Tribes protected the young state from the attacks of the Avars. The Proto-Bulgarians defended the north and the east.

However, it was quite clear to Asparouh that any possible danger from Byzantium would have to be eliminated if his state were to be placed on firm foundations, and because the best means of defence is attack, he led a large army towards the Byzantine territory beyond the Haemus. The Byzantine Empire felt the might of the combined forces of the Slavs and Proto-Bulgarians in the very first skirmishes. The actions of Asparouh's troops were all crowned with success, and the Empire was forced to come to terms with its own helplessness. In the year 681, Byzantium concluded a peace treaty with Bulgaria without suspecting, however, that this meant the recognition of a new state which was to outlive her.

Byzantine chroniclers, deeply offended by the conclusion of the peace treaty, which they considered to be "the shame of the Byzantines", do not mention anything of the very early history of Bulgaria. We are unable to reconstruct this process of construction in detail, a process which must have been filled with dynamism and wisely guided by Khan Asparouh. Later events show,

however, that these were the years in which the unity between the Slavs and the Bulgarians was cemented, in which the foundations of the state structure were laid, and in which the trends of foreign policy began to shape.

The silence of the Byzantine chroniclers does not mean, however, that the Empire was indifferent to the new state. The Emperor simply regarded the peace treaty as a means of gaining time to launch an attack to the north and do away with the state he had been compelled to recognize. In order to deprive the Bulgarians of the peace that they needed, the Byzantines sent the Avars against them. Khan Asparouh drove the Avars far to the West, and incorporated the Timochani tribe into his state, giving them all the rights of free members of the Slav-Bulgarian alliance.

The failure of the Avars compelled the new Byzantine Emperor personally to take measures against his northern neighbour. The war in which the Slavs from the south-western territories (which still belonged to Byzantium), fought on the side of the Bulgarians, began in 688. Success for the Emperor was followed by a severe defeat. It was somewhere in the passes of the southern Rhodopes that Asparouh completely routed the Byzantine army.

At this point the chroniclers again fall silent as far as Bulgaria and her ruler are concerned. Almost two decades of his life are a complete blank. There is, however, in the hearts of his people a cherished memory which can be found in the apocryphal MS already mentioned. In the year 701 when his sworn enemies, the Khazars, invaded Bulgaria, Khan Asparouh himself led the Bulgarian cavalry and Slav infantry against them. In the bloody battle which ensued on the banks of the Danube, Asparouh was killed by an enemy spear.

That which Khan Asparouh had achieved, however, was immortal. Bulgaria, which he had created with wisdom and foresight, survived all the vicissitudes of fate, and is still in existence to this day.

PRINCE BORIS I

"Boris, ruler of the Bulgarians by God's will, renamed Michael, together with the people God had given him, accepted the Word of God in the year 6371" (866).

Inscription from the time of Prince Boris I, discovered in the village of Balshi, Southern Albania.

In the year 852, many messengers set out from the Bulgarian capital of Pliska, taking dusty roads to countries near and far, to announce that Bulgaria had a new ruler — Boris I. Boris, who was the son and grandson of khans, had an enviable heritage. His ancestors, a galaxy of brilliant military leaders and wise statesmen, had extended the territory of the state to an incredible degree, strengthened the authority of the central power and raised Bulgaria's international prestige. It looked as if the road which the young Bulgarian ruler was to take would be straight and smooth. The country's foreign policy, which was one of uniting the neighbouring Slav tribes with the Bulgarian state, had already been mapped out in the preceding centuries. This was achieved by constant battles and skirmishes with Bulgaria's neighbours, above all, Byzantium. The trends of a domestic policy were also known; this involved creating a feeling of political unity among the many tribes which composed the state, both Slav and Proto-Bulgarian, strengthening the personal authority and

power of the ruler, who, for the last half century, had borne the title "appointed by God".

History, however, is a great lover of surprises. The smooth and straight-looking road proved to be steep and anything but straight, and the second half of the 9th century — a strenuous period in which Bulgaria's fate was to be determined. Prince Boris I was to be confronted with some extremely complex problems which were to demand a great deal of wisdom, foresight and tact. Problems were coming to a head in the Bulgarian state the solution of which could have proved fatal to her future. However, the Bulgarian Prince Boris I proved to be worthy of the immensely important problems which faced his country.

The first political moves of the new ruler were in the spirit of the hostile policy towards the country's neighbours which had been pursued for centuries. He sent his troops against the Germans, but it soon became clear that Prince Boris I was not in his element in battle. The subsequent German invasion of Bulgaria brought ruin and destruction to a people already exhausted by the preceding wars. The unsuccessful military leader took a close look at his own people in an attempt to discern the contradictions which had already crystallized in its political life and to weigh the difficulty of the task which confronted him.

By the middle of the 9th century, the need for the complete fusion of the two ethnic elements — Slavs and Proto-Bulgarians — had become obvious. This process had commenced centuries ago, but it was a slow one, constantly hindered by the religious differences between them. The Slav god Peroun and the Proto-Bulgarian god Tangra were among the last obstacles to the final formation of a single nationality — Bulgarian.

The ruler discovered with dismay that Bulgaria, which on the field of battle was a worthy adversary of the great powers of that time — Byzantium and the German Kingdom — was not playing the part it should have played on the international stage. Christian Europe treated the pagan Bulgarians with disdain, considering them to be barbarians. Prince Boris I even realized

with surprise that the haughty Europeans were right to a certain extent. His subjects were not familiar with the culture of the early Middle Ages, which was founded on the Christian religion. Belief in Peroun and Tangra had condemned his people to spiritual isolation.

There was another thing that the Bulgarian ruler had realized, although he had not formulated his thoughts as clearly and logically as modern historians do: he was fully aware of the fact that feudalization was rapidly taking place in the middle of the 9th century. An ever-growing part of the population was becoming dependent on a small ruling class, a feudal aristocracy was becoming ever more clearly defined, and the contradictions between peasants and boyars were becoming more and more evident. Prince Boris I felt that belief in Peroun and Tangra, the product of an era when everyone was equal, did not correspond to the requirements of the time. A new god had to be found. A god, faith in whom would strengthen and sanction the feudal system.

It was not only Prince Boris who correctly interpreted the problems which confronted his state; no doubt, his advisers and friends also felt the paralyzing strength of paganism.

Most probably it was not only the Bulgarian ruler who possessed foresight; some of the feudal lords who were in touch with reality must also have thought that the adoption of Christianity as the official religion was the only solution.

That, however, which clearly distinguishes Prince Boris I from his contemporaries is his decision to break with centuries of tradition and to lead his state and his people along a new path.

It is not easy for us to understand the doubts, torments and hopes of the young ruler. To trample upon the god of one's forefathers, one's own god and to adopt the faith of one's enemies must have required considerable courage in the 9th century, especially when one considers that, oppressed by the circumstances of the time, Prince Boris had to take this decision not only for himself, but also for a whole people. He knew

that a false step would mean ruin for Bulgaria, that he would be cursed by his ancestors and bear the bitter reproach of his descendents throughout the centuries.

In 862, ten years after he ascended the Bulgarian throne, Prince Boris felt prepared to take the enormous risk and to change the course of his people's history. In the same year, having entered into a military alliance with the German Kingdom against Moravia and Byzantium, he undertook to adopt Christianity from the Western church.

Byzantium, however, could not allow her nearest neighbour to be open to German influence. In the following year, 863, the Byzantines sent troops to Bulgaria to force Prince Boris to change his intentions. The Bulgarians, who had been beset by a series of natural calamities were unable to drive out the invaders. Boris asked for an armistice with Byzantium and broke with the Germans. The peace treaty provided that the Bulgarian people should adopt the Christian religion of the Eastern Church of Constantinople.

One night in the year 864, Prince Boris secretly adopted Christianity in his palace, taking the name of his godfather — the Byzantine Emperor Michael. The adoption of Christianity on a nation-wide scale began soon afterwards, and it was declared to be the only religion, which was compulsory for all subjects of the Bulgarian state. Like every neophyte, Prince Boris I took extremely cruel measures against the pagans. Their temples and shrines were razed to the ground. The enforcement of the Christian religion, it seemed, did not merely solve old problems but gave rise to many new ones.

The change in religion meant a change in the way of life, morals and ethics of the whole of Bulgarian society. Discontent, a protest against the Prince's "evil law" seethed among the people.

On the other hand, Christianity provided a point of entry for Byzantine influence, that is, on condition that church organization was not left entirely to the Bulgarians. But how could this Christian god fulfil all the tasks that Prince Boris expected of him if his word was preached by Greek priests in the Greek language? He

had to prepare Bulgarian priests and found a Bulgarian church, so as to make his people forget Peroun and Tangra and begin to believe in Christ.

When Prince Boris revealed his plans, discontent among the masses reached the state of open rebellion. It was then that the ruler's firm will manifested itself. Christ did not stop him when he pronounced the death sentence on those who had headed the rebellion, who, with their political and economic power, had endangered his plans. The newly-baptized Christian slaughtered them all, together with their families, as a lesson; this was dictated not by love for the new god, but by the interests of the state.

On the other hand, the interests of the state also required that its ruler do everything possible to prevent Byzantine influence by establishing a church organization, in which all the priests and other officials would be Bulgarians.

Byzantium rejected Prince Boris' plea for an independent Bulgarian church. He then turned to Rome, but it soon became clear that the Pope was not likely to satisfy his demand. He then commenced a well thought-out, but difficult diplomatic game. Being well acquainted with the conflicts of his time, he made use of the ever growing contradictions between Constantinople and Rome, and with a great deal of tact achieved his aim. The Oecumenical Council of 870 decided that the Bulgarian church should recognize the supremacy of Constantinople, but should have its own archbishop. Prince Boris I, the former barbarian, won a brilliant diplomatic victory over Pope Nicolas I and Patriarch Photius, two of the wisest and most ambitious church leaders of the Middle Ages.

The next step to be taken was to provide for the preaching of the Christian religion in the Slavonic language. This took place in the year 885, when the disciples of Cyril and Methodius, who had been driven from Moravia and Pannonia were welcomed with open arms in Bulgaria. Clement, Nahum and Angelarius were afforded full support and facilities by Prince Boris to propagate the results of their educational and cultural ac-

tivities. This step, which laid firm foundations for the education of the Slavs, was to prove its value in the events that followed.

Prince Boris I was very well aware of the significance of the introduction and propagation of the Slavonic alphabet. He set his most trusted advisers to work on this ecclesiastical and educational activity. His brother Dox and his nephew Toudor donned monks' habits. The most talented of the Prince's sons, Symeon, was prepared for educational work. After years of hard work that had been filled with tension, Prince Boris renounced his throne and retired to a monastery.

When his son Vladimir attempted to reverse the train of events, to take a different course of action than that of his father, the old ruler again took up the sword in order to defend his life's work and the future of his people. When the interests of Bulgaria were at stake, Prince Boris did not hesitate to inflict a cruel punishment even on his son, who was blinded. The Prince's other son, Symeon, was placed on the throne. The decision taken by Prince Boris was given full support at a ceremonial gathering which took place at Preslav, the city which was to become the first centre of Slavonic culture, in 893. Two more equally important decisions were taken at the gathering — that the capital of the state should be transferred from pagan Pliska to Christian Preslav, and that the Greek priests should be expelled and replaced by Bulgarians. Assured of the fate of his people, and confident in Symeon's wisdom and loyalty, Boris I again retired to his monastery, where he passed away on May 2, 907, convinced that he would never be condemned by posterity. His deeds, which were dedicated to Bulgaria, were the last and extremely important stage in the process of the building of a united Bulgarian national group.

TSVETANA GEORGIEVA

CYRIL AND METHODIUS

‘If however, you ask the Slav scribes: ‘Who created an alphabet for you and translated books for you?’ all of them know, and will answer: ‘St. Constantine the Philosopher, named Cyril; he created our alphabet and translated the books, together with his brother Methodius’”

From the discourse of the Monk
Hrabur
Of Letters

In 1969, according to a decision taken by UNESCO, cultural circles all over the world celebrated the 1,100th anniversary of the death of Constantine-Cyril the Philosopher, one of the eminent figures of the pre-Renaissance era, whose work laid the foundations of modern civilization. The capital of Bulgaria, Sofia, was the centre of the celebrations which were attended by representatives of cultural circles from the whole world; they expressed their reverence and respect for Constantine-Cyril's great work. It was 11 centuries ago that this brilliant scion of the Slavs from the south-western part of the Balkan Peninsula created an alphabet, which corresponded to the needs of his fellow-countrymen, and did everything possible to ensure that it should become available to those for whom it was intended. This alphabet is the foundation-stone on which the culture and literature of the Bulgarians, Serbs, Russians and Rumanians was later to be built. All his life, and in all his

works, Constantine-Cyril, the Philosopher, had the full support of his brother, Methodius. It is not a matter of chance that the two brothers were canonized in the Middle Ages by the Bulgarians as a mark of gratitude.

Cyril and Methodius were born in Salonica, their father was a well-known local military leader whose name was Leo. It is now generally accepted that Cyril and Methodius were Slavs by origin; it also seems likely that their mother, who is referred to by a mediaeval biographer as Maria, was a Slav. In the 9th century, it was quite usual in a place such as Salonica, which was surrounded by a large number of Slavs and where they formed a major part of the population, for mixed marriages between Byzantines and Slavs to take place. In this large family, which consisted of eight children, it was, of course, the mother who took care of them and the children grew up with a feeling of ethnic allegiance to the Slavs. It was two of the many children of Leo and Maria who showed their pride in their Slav ancestry in an unequivocal way.

Methodius, the elder of the brothers, was born around 815, and the youngest of all the children, Constantine, who bore the monk's name Cyril, was born ten years later. The children grew up in a wealthy environment because of their father, but this atmosphere was imbued with a Slav spirit by their mother.

Methodius, who had received a good education for his time, was appointed as district governor between 840 and 841. The district he governed was in the valley of the Lower Strouma River and was populated by Slavs. The Byzantine Empire held great hopes that the children of mixed marriages would aid them in their assimilative, anti-Slav policy. It was considered that such people would find a common language with their fellow-tribesmen and that in this way they would become exponents of Byzantine ideas and aims. The new governor, however, who felt that he was among his own people, and who had preserved the entire Slav heritage of his mother, sensed the state of ferment which reigned among the Slavs. This huge number of Slavs who, in the 6th and 7th centuries, surged into the southern and

eastern regions of the Balkan Peninsula, began to gain a feeling of national consciousness in the 9th century. Encouraged by the existence of an independent Bulgaria, which was rapidly gaining a completely Slav image, this process also affected the Slavs living within the borders of the Byzantine Empire. This proved to be the main stumbling block to the assimilative policies of the Byzantines. The Slavs, who lived on the banks of the lower reaches of the Strouma, and who had been entrusted to Methodius, were no exception to this rule. Here, Methodius perceived not only the stubborn resistance of the Slavs against the might of Byzantine power, but also realized that this strong and vital people should be given support in order to attain stability. When he had lived among the Slavs ten years, Methodius resigned from his post quite unexpectedly and without apparent reason; he turned his back on the brilliant career that awaited him and withdrew to the Polychron Monastery on Mt Olympus in Asia Minor. Most people who are acquainted with his biography consider that the reason for this action was not the salvation of his soul but a wish to help his fellow-Slavs, an effort to find a way in which to do something positive for them.

Cyril, the youngest of the children of the Salonica military leader, showed his alert mentality as a very young child. His parents were the first to notice their son's gifts, and it was not long before the child was placed under the guidance of the Logothetos Theoctistus, who was most influential at the Emperor's court. Certain people consider, not by mere chance, that behind the generous care of the Logothetos were concealed some of the Byzantine Empire's assimilative designs on the Slavs. The first educator of the Slavs was an exceptionally gifted man, and it was inevitable that the patronage of Theoctistus should bear rich fruits. Around 843, Cyril left for Constantinople and was enrolled at the Magnaura School. There, he was among the chosen, those who, in a matter of ten years' time, would become the ecclesiastical élite of the Byzantine Empire; the great gifts of this silent and introverted Salonican were evi-

dent even among such brilliant scholars. These gifts were ideally combined with an ability to work untiringly and a thirst for knowledge. Cyril's teacher at the Magnaura School was the future patriarch, Photius, whose erudition and broad-mindedness were of a standard far in advance of the era in which he lived. Among his teachers was Leo the Mathematician, whose knowledge and didactic skill served as a model for other scholars. The talented pupil mastered the knowledge which the highest educational institute of that epoch gave him in a short time and was awarded a philosopher's degree in recognition of his exceptional abilities and immense knowledge.

There would have been a brilliant future in store for this outstanding student of the Magnaura School. He was offered a future which would have pleased a Byzantine. The Logothetos Theoctistus who had thought to make use of his gifts for political ends, and perhaps in court intrigues, offered to marry him to a beautiful and rich maiden, a close relative of his. Having been brought up in a family to which the corruption of the Byzantine aristocracy was quite foreign, and being well acquainted with the morals of the court, Cyril refused his patron's proposal. All offers of high posts were also met with the same persistent refusal. It then became clear to Theoctistus that he would not be able to draw his pupil into the life of the court and in order not to "let him slip through our fingers", as he himself put it, he tried to find him an occupation which was in keeping with his inclinations. Cyril was appointed as librarian to the Constantinople Patriarchy and not long afterwards became a teacher at the Magnaura School. When it became necessary to send someone to the Arabs on a politico-theological mission, the court decided that Cyril was the right person. The latter, however, was not attracted by secular life and a brilliant career. According to his short biography, immediately after his return from the Arab mission, Cyril left Constantinople and went into hiding in the district around the River Bregalnitsa, where he baptized 54,000 of his fellow-Slavs in the Christian faith. It was probably at this time that the

idea of creating a Slavonic alphabet, which was a vital necessity for the future of the Slavs, came to him. This would mean the creation of Slavonic letters and literature. In order to carry out this magnificent idea, Cyril renounced secular life and retired to the Polychron Monastery with his brother. In this cloister, which was entirely cut off from the outer world, the two brothers commenced the work which was later to bring them the gratitude and love of all the Slav peoples.

Cyril and Methodius set to work knowing that the task they had set themselves was exceptionally difficult, but convinced that it was vitally necessary. It is quite probable that from the beginning they were not alone, but aided by loyal and devoted students. It was here, in the Polychron Monastery, that the first Slav literary school was founded.

It was an immense task which required a great deal of effort, time and labour. A systematization of all the Slav sounds had to be made; they then had to be compared to the Greek sounds, and a graphic means of expression for every sound had to be devised. The whole project was supervised and guided by Cyril, who was a talented philologist and a brilliant scholar of both Slav and Greek. The first Slavonic alphabet, which was later to be referred to as the Glagolitic alphabet, was created; it was based on the Greek, but modified to suit the specific phonetic qualities of the Slavonic language. According to most of the historical sources of the time, Cyril and Methodius completed this work about 855. The creators of the alphabet could scarcely have realized the immense significance of the work they had carried out in the Polychron Monastery, because the Slavonic alphabet was to make it possible for the millions of Slavs to achieve a culture and an independent existence of their own.

The creation of the alphabet, however, was only the beginning of the work of Cyril and Methodius. If there was to be any sense in their work it would have to be applied in life. The hard work of translating the liturgies now began. Very few of us can understand the difficulty of translating the scriptures into a language which

had no clear and logical grammar at that time. At this point, we again see the immense abilities of Cyril, the first educator of the Slavs. He made an analysis of the Slav grammatical categories and systematized them, established syntactical links between them and created hundreds of new words. The surviving excerpts of his works are striking for their perfection, and in no way resemble the first examples of an entirely new literature.

The first educators, and their disciples, began translating a large number of religious texts from Greek into the Slavonic language. Their wish to create a Slavonic alphabet was connected with the needs of the Bulgarian Slavs and the processes which were taking place in their society. All surviving manuscripts dating from the period in which the Slavonic alphabet was founded are in Old Bulgarian. Later Cyril and his brother Methodius began not only to translate, but also to write original works in Old Bulgarian. It was in this way that Old Bulgarian literature was born.

Around 859, the fruitful work of the brothers from Salonica was interrupted. Cyril was sent on a new politico-theological mission to the Khazars in the Crimea. In the khanate, where Judaism had long ago gained ground, Cyril and his suite were courteously received, but it was abundantly clear that the possibilities of introducing Christianity there were almost non-existent.

After their return to Byzantium, the brothers were unable to concentrate on their work for a considerable time, because the Emperor sent them on a new mission; this time, however, the mission was to give them scope to propagate their great work, and to make it available to the masses of Slavs. In the year 862, the Emperor ordered Cyril and Methodius to set out for Moravia where they would preach sermons in the Slavonic language. A year later, they arrived in Veligrad.

The re-grouping of powers in Europe that had been taking place over the past few years was responsible for sending the creators of the Slavonic alphabet to the Moravian Slavs. Rivalry between the Patriarchy of Constantinople and the Vatican was becoming more acute.

The bone of contention was to be the Slavs, who were rapidly forming national groups; they were still pagan, but they were soon to adopt Christianity. The question was which of the two churches would be able to exert greater influence. The aim of both the Eastern and Western churches was, by means of Christianization, to assimilate the Slavs. For the Southern Slavs, there was no more persistent and fearful enemy than Byzantium. When, for many reasons, Slav Bulgaria considered adopting Christianity, Boris I first turned to the Germans and the Pope. The Western Slavs, having adopted Christianity, felt the undisguised assimilative policy of the German feudal rulers and priests. In order to halt this process, the Moravian prince, Rostislav, asked Byzantium to send him preachers in the Slavonic language. Byzantium, which was doing everything possible to prevent the Slavonic script from reaching her nearest neighbours, the Bulgarians, hastened to assist its penetration in Moravia.

The German clergy, however, realizing the great threat which the preaching of the Christian religion in the Slavonic language and the propagation of the Slavonic alphabet posed for them, gave the Slav educators and their disciples a hostile reception. Cyril and Methodius had to answer the accusations and false slanders of the German clergy, and to make all possible efforts to guard their life's work from the unfounded abuse of their opponents. Around 867, when attacks on the two brothers had become almost intolerable, they set off for Rome in order to explain their case to the Pope himself. Their road led them through Pannonia, where the ruler Kotsel received them with open arms. They then passed through Venice where Cyril, with his eloquence and logic, defended the independent existence of the Slavonic alphabet, something which was opposed by the reactionary adherents of the tri-lingual dogma. The Slav educators were met with understanding in Rome, and were promised a bishop's post. Pope Adrian II delayed their return, however, and indirectly aided the German priests in strengthening their position in Moravia. At that time, the life of Cyril, a life filled with

tension and battles, was nearing its end. On February 19, 869, he died in Rome and was ceremonially buried in the church of San Clemente. Methodius was given the rank of Bishop for Moravia and Pannonia, and set off on the return journey, in order to carry on the great work of establishing Slav literacy alone. For 16 years — until his death in 885 — he led the battle of the Western Slavs untiringly, passionately and staunchly against German incursions. He suffered the privation and humiliation of a German prison in Bavaria, forced to give fresh explanations to the new Pope in Rome, and persecuted by Rostislav's successor, Svetopoulk, Methodius stood unflinching against the attacks of his enemies with the self-sacrifice of an apostle. After the horrors of continual persecution, he found the strength not only to guard the tender seedlings of the Slavonic script but to continue to work energetically; he translated, wrote original works and prepared disciples. His death, however, put an end to the educational movement that had commenced among the Western Slavs. The Slav manuscripts were burnt, and the disciples of the first Slav educators, having been subjected to inhuman tortures, were expelled from Moravia. It was then that some of them, passing down the Danube and through Belgrade, or by other distant roads, came to Bulgaria to look for facilities to carry on their work; this was the country for which the Slav alphabet was created. Clement, Nahum and Angelarius, and other disciples of Cyril and Methodius, were given a warm welcome by Prince Boris I. They found something of which their teachers had only been able to dream — the full and sincere support of the ruler, the nobility and the people. Slavonic literature blossomed and put down strong roots which were to spread from Bulgaria to the other Slav countries.

TSAR SYMEON

"In the year since the Creation of the World 6412 (904), in the seventh indiction. Boundary-stone between the Byzantines and the Bulgarians. At the time of Symeon, ruler of the Bulgarians by God's will, and of Teodor, *oghloutarkhan** and Dristra, comes**."

Inscription on a column found in the village of Narush, Salonica area.

The decisions taken by the Preslav, Council in 893 were wise and had far-reaching consequences. Transferring the capital to Preslav and the expulsion of the Greek priests gave ever greater scope to the propagation of Prince Boris's life-work, and the passing of power into the hands of Symeon guaranteed its future success. No more talented builder of this project, the foundations of which were laid by Prince Boris, could be found than his youngest son.

Symeon seems to have been the personification of the tremendous advance that Bulgaria had achieved at the end of the 9th and the beginning of the 10th century. Nature had been extremely generous to this Bulgarian prince. Far-sighted in his plans, decisive in his actions, he seemed to have been preordained for the duty that his father had set him — to head the young Bulga-

* *Ogloutarkhan* — court official of ministerial rank.

** *Comes* — governor of a region.

rian church. Boris was too wise, however, to put all his faith in nature and made sure that his son had an excellent education. In order that his knowledge should meet the requirements of the culture of that time, he sent him to the famous Magnaura School in Constantinople. There, the extraordinary gifts of the Bulgarian were evident even among the sons of the Byzantine aristocracy. The Byzantines called him "half-Greek", a recognition of his exceptional erudition which had been given to no other foreigner.

Symeon, who had been placed on the throne to continue the great task of Slav education, directed his efforts at controlling and co-ordinating the nation-wide process of construction which was then at its height. This process was not to last for long, however. In the very first year of his rule, Byzantium put a stop to his peaceful labour. The expulsion of the Greek priests meant the end of Byzantium's hopes of expanding its spiritual influence in Bulgaria, and because it was unable to reverse this act, it decided to apply economic pressure on its northern neighbour, transferring the market of the Bulgarian merchants from Constantinople to Salonica. This change seriously affected the interests of Bulgaria's foreign trade. Symeon sought to solve this conflict peacefully, but Byzantium turned a deaf ear to his pleas and openly provoked him to declare war. It was Symeon who launched the attack on Byzantium, and inflicted a heavy defeat on the Byzantine army near Adrianople (today Edirné). Defeated in battle, the Empire resorted to diplomatic means, and incited the Magyars, whose camp was on the Lower Danube, to attack the Bulgarians. The Magyars invaded North Dobroudja, and the Bulgarian ruler found himself surrounded by enemies. However, Symeon had not been given the title "half-Greek" for nothing; he was well acquainted with the wiles of Byzantine diplomacy and, as was to become obvious at a later date, made skilful use of them. He concluded a truce with Byzantium, and lengthy negotiations commenced. Meanwhile his messengers rapidly set off northwards with the task of forming an alliance with the Patzinaks against the Magyars. In

the spring of 896, Symeon's plans were crowned with success. The Bulgarian and the Patzinaks troops not only routed the Magyars, but drove them far to the west, where they settled in the valley of the Theisse and the Middle Danube. Symeon once more sent his army against Byzantium, and inflicted a total defeat on her at Bulgaro-phygon. Humiliated, the Byzantine Emperor Leo VI made servile pleas for peace, accepting all conditions laid down by the victors.

Bulgaria again settled down to a period of peaceful construction. The young Slav-Bulgarian culture flourished. An enormous quantity of religious literature was translated, and an independent Bulgarian literature developed. A brilliant galaxy of scholars worked in the Bulgarian cultural centres of Preslav and Ohrid; these included Clement of Ohrid, Constantine of Preslav, and John the Exarch. Symeon not only supervised their work, but took an active part in it. Many specialists now consider that the talented apologist of the Slavonic alphabet, who is known as the Monk Hrabur, was the Bulgarian ruler himself. The drive for education was so strong and so widespread in the time of Symeon that the generations that followed called this period "the Golden Age of Bulgarian culture and literature".

The might of this state was reflected in a programme of building on a scale unprecedented for that epoch. Preslav was completely rebuilt, and magnificent palaces, which befitted the authority of the ruler, were constructed. Glittering white churches arose one after the other. Their magnificence inspired the people of that time, and even today, that which emerges from beneath the archaeologist's spade delights the eye with its majesty and beauty.

Symeon was also a wise and far-seeing statesman. He was fully aware of the fact that the century in which he lived was radically different from the preceding centuries, and perceived the changes that had taken place in Bulgarian society. In order to satisfy a demand that had existed for some time, he ordered that the first written Bulgarian statute book should be compiled — the *Law for Judging People*. This reflected the

tremendous changes that had taken place in the morals and ethics of the Bulgarian people, changes that had set in as a result of feudalization.

Unlike his father, Symeon was not only a statesman and a scholar. In 913, he again led a huge army against Byzantium, which was in acute difficulties at the time, and even reached the walls of Constantinople. Byzantium recognized the title of Tsar for the Bulgarian ruler, and the Patriarch of Constantinople crowned the first Bulgarian Tsar, Symeon, in a solemn ceremony. As a mark of recognition of the greatness of the Bulgarian state and its ruler, the Byzantines agreed that their Emperor, who was still a minor, should become engaged to Symeon's daughter.

This act was an official recognition of the fact that Bulgaria, which had been hardened by centuries of struggle for existence, had attained full national unity, and had become a major cultural centre, was now the greatest political power in South-East Europe.

The Empire was unable to come to terms with a situation which made its helplessness obvious. A coup d'état led to a change in the regents of Constantine VI, and Byzantium refused to recognize Symeon as Tsar of the Bulgarians. The latter replied to this open provocation with war, and in 914, invaded Thrace and captured Adrianople. Byzantium persuaded the Bulgarian Tsar to conclude a peace treaty with rich gifts, and at the same time was preparing for a decisive confrontation with her northern neighbour. The Empire had concluded a peace treaty with the Caliphate of Baghdad and began to form an anti-Bulgarian coalition in which all Bulgaria's neighbours were to be included: the Serbs, the Patzinaks and the Magyars. Byzantium itself marshalled an immense army and in August 917 sent its entire forces against Bulgaria; the Byzantine army was defeated on August 20 in the same year. The Bulgarian troops, led by Symeon, inflicted a severe defeat on the Byzantines on the plain at the River Acheloë; this is surely one of the most radiant passages in the whole of Bulgaria's military history. The danger which had menaced the country had been removed, and the anti-Bul-

garian coalition disintegrated ingloriously. The Patzi-naks who feared the might of Bulgaria, refused to set foot south of the Danube, and the Serbian rulers paid heavily for their mercenary intentions; Bulgarian troops crossed the western borders, laid waste their lands and brought their leader Peter Goynikovich to Preslav as a prisoner; his place on the Serbian throne was taken by Pavel Branovich.

Byzantium's plight was desperate, and Symeon was threatening to enter Constantinople, to destroy the Empire and to found a Slav state in its place. In order to give force to his words, and to demonstrate the might of his vast state, which now possessed much territory that had belonged to Byzantium, he began to call himself "Tsar of the Bulgarians and Byzantines". A manifestation of the power of his state of immense significance was the creation of the Bulgarian Patriarchate in 918.

The 920s commenced with a long struggle between Bulgaria and Byzantium, in which the latter came very close to total defeat several times. In 920, Symeon reached the Isthmus of Corinth and to the east, his troops were on the banks of the Dardanelles. The Constantinople Patriarch made persistent pleas for peace. Changes at the court could not remove the danger which threatened the Empire. Bulgarian detachments reached the outskirts of Constantinople and routed the Byzantine forces sent to bar their way. While Patriarch Nicholas Mysticus was making servile pleas for peace, Byzantine diplomats were inciting the Serbs to rebellion. Pavel Branovich's uprising was crushed, and his place was taken by Zahari, son of Prvoslav.

Symeon, convinced of the power of his state, and having decided to put an end to the Byzantine Empire, sought a reliable maritime ally. Messengers were sent to the Caliph of Baghdad, Al Mahdi, who agreed to an alliance. The horrified Byzantines sent gold and precious gifts to the Caliph, and succeeded in drawing him out of the alliance with Bulgaria.

In reply to Byzantine overtures for peace, Symeon replied with a demand for the Empire's possessions in

Europe to be handed over to him, and to be accorded a ceremonial reception in Constantinople. Byzantium, which was helpless on the field of battle, again incited the Serbs to rebellion in order to distract the attention of the Bulgarians. Symeon once again inflicted severe punishment on the rebels, and Prince Zahari was obliged to seek asylum in Croatia. The angry ruler also threatened Croatia with war, but this campaign was unsuccessful, and a peace treaty was soon concluded.

Symeon began to marshal his forces for a new and decisive campaign against a terrified Byzantium. On May 27, 927, however, the Empire heaved a sigh of relief, because the Bulgarian ruler suddenly passed away.

Even if Symeon, the valiant military leader, was unable to finish the immense task he had set himself, Symeon, the wise builder of Bulgaria's culture, was able to close his eyes to the world with a clear conscience, for the foundation-stones he had laid were of granite and survived all the vicissitudes to which both the state and the people were to be subjected in the future.

TSVETANA GEORGIEVA

CLEMENT OF OHRID

"This, our great father and the light of Bulgaria, was by origin one of the European Moesians whom the people also know as Bulgarians".

From the short *Life of Clement*
by Demetrius Chomatianus

The death of Methodius marked the decline of the propagation of Slavonic letters and culture among the Western Slavs in Moravia and Pannonia. After the death of the first Slav educator, the enemies of Slavonic education, the German feudal rulers and priests, ruthlessly destroyed everything that he had created in the preceding decades. While the first books to be written in the Slavonic language were being burnt on huge pyres, the pupils of Cyril and Methodius were subjected to intense cruelty because of their devotion to and love for the new Slavonic scholarship. Very few would be able to withstand the moral and physical privations which were inflicted on the disciples of the brothers from Salonica. In an extremely short time, everything that they had achieved with so much effort and suffering was destroyed before their eyes. They were cast into prison, where they were subjected to tortures which were beyond endurance, and when political expediency dictated that these measures should cease, the younger men were sold as slaves and the older ones expelled from the country. Many of them however, already knew where they would be able to find not only peace and

quiet, but also a place where they would be given scope to carry on the work that they had started; this was the reason why they set out for Bulgaria, the ruler of which, Prince Boris I "craved for men of letters". Quite a number of Cyril and Methodius's disciples set out, and some of them, having overcome the numerous difficulties, succeeded in reaching Bulgaria, the place they had dreamed of. In the surviving historical sources, however, the names of only a very few of them remain: Clement, Nahum, Sava and Angelarius. Among these great Slav educators both the Medieval chroniclers and modern scholars give Clement of Ohrid the greatest prominence; he was the first bishop of Bulgarian origin.

Modern historical science has two medieval biographies of Clement of Ohrid, to which it can turn, which make it possible to trace the life-story of this great Bulgarian scholar. Born in the same Slav area of which Methodius had been governor, he began to associate with the two brothers from Salonica while still very young and took an active part in their work. Most contemporary historians consider, basing this on certain information in the sources mentioned, that Clement was one of the disciples of Cyril and Methodius who, as early as the period spent in the Polychron Monastery, had taken part in the creation of the alphabet and the translation of books into the Slavonic language.

In the year 862, when the Byzantine Emperor sent the two brothers on their difficult mission to Moravia, Clement also travelled with them. He was one of the most active participants in building the foundations of Slavonic education. Clement, who was a close friend of Cyril and Methodius, accompanied them on their long journey from Veligrad to Rome and took an active part in the campaign which won the Pope's recognition of the cause of Slavonic education. The extent to which he was valued by his teachers is evident from the fact that Clement was one of those whom Constantine-Cyril the Philosopher called to his deathbed and instructed to carry out the work he had begun.

After his return to Pannonia, over the next 16 years, Clement became the closest friend and constant compa-

nion of Methodius. These years were spent in untiring work for the creation and consolidation of the Slav church and Slav education, in an unremitting struggle against the incursions and influence of the German clergy. Clement wrote many original works, some of the earliest to be written in the Slavonic language, while in Moravia and Pannonia, and energetically trained new disciples for the work of Slav education.

In Bulgaria, Clement and his friends not only found hospitality, but excellent facilities for their work. They were given a respectful welcome in the Bulgarian capital of Pliska, and Clement and Nahum were installed in the house of the Boyar Eskhach, where they were surrounded with care and attention. When they had recovered from the tortures inflicted on them by the Germans and from the exhausting journey, he and the disciples of Cyril and Methodius discussed with Prince Boris I the plans, the realization of which was to bar the path of Byzantine influence in Bulgaria and to open up wide horizons for her people. When they had outlined their plans for the future, which were immense in their scope and significance, Clement left Pliska and went to South-West Bulgaria in order to fulfil these tasks, tasks of vital importance to Prince Boris I and his people.

The sending of Clement to these remote parts of Bulgaria could be interpreted not only by the fact that he came from these regions, and perhaps had wanted to sow the seeds of Slavonic education in his place of birth. The plan that had been conceived for the substitution of the Greek service with a Bulgarian one necessitated a tremendous amount of preparation, and had to take effect not only in the capital, but also in the remotest parts of the country; the south-western districts had been incorporated into Bulgaria comparatively recently, and Byzantine influence was stronger there; this meant that greater efforts had to be made to destroy Greek influence and to strengthen the position of the Bulgarians; and Clement had accumulated a great deal of experience in the lands of the Western Slavs.

In order to secure for Clement the conditions he needed for his work, the far-sighted Prince Boris I

changed the local administration and appointed the boyar Dometa as district governor, a man who was devoted to Clement's work. The latter undertook the difficult task of seeing that Clement's work encountered no obstacles. Boris I himself presented Clement with three of his finest houses in Devol and retreats near Ohrid and Glavinitsa as an example to the boyars and the people.

Having received that for which Cyril and Methodius had longed in vain — the full co-operation and firm support of the ruler, and inspired by the respect and admiration of the people as a whole, Clement set to work, aiming to consolidate what he had achieved in the field of Slavonic education. In this district, there was still a considerable pagan heritage and Clement directed his efforts at converting the population to Christianity; the aim of all this, however, was educational. The fulfilment of the basic task — the introduction of the Slavonic language into the church service — demanded the training of a large number of Bulgarian priests to take over the functions of the priests that had been sent by Byzantium. Clement, who was well aware of the importance of this task, not only began training thousands of young Bulgarians to read and write in the Slavonic language, but also taught them Christian dogma, turning people who had until then been quite illiterate into good priests and faithful disciples and supporters of his work. It was here that Clement's brilliant organizational and educational abilities became evident. He trained 3,500 men who fully satisfied the needs of the young Bulgarian church. The immense erudition of his pupils, which was far beyond the schooling of that period, and their excellent training lend full support to the assertions of some scholars that the Ohrid School, founded and supervised by Clement, was in fact the first Slavonic university, which was only rivalled by the school founded by his friend Nahum in the second Bulgarian capital of Preslav. Clement, bearing in mind the tasks he had been set, had a number of churches and monasteries built.

These ecclesiastical and educational activities did

not consume the whole of Clement's zeal and energy, however. He also continued to write and translate. He translated many books of canon law and wrote many discourses and homilies, which with their clear language which was comprehensible to the masses of the people, made the still foreign Christian dogma understandable to everyone. He founded a new literary school which was a continuation of that of Cyril and Methodius. Clement did not stop at this, however. Most experts on the early Slavonic script insist that he also created the second Slavonic alphabet, the Cyrillic, which was more suitable for the process of the democratization of literacy.

After the Preslav Council of 893, when the reins which guided Bulgaria's future were placed in the hands of Prince Boris's faithful heir, Symeon, Clement, the most worthy of all the untiring warriors of Slavonic education, was appointed as the first bishop to preach in the Bulgarian language. This was not only an act of recognition, but a great responsibility, for Clement was well aware that he was entrusted with the further realization of the plan that had been devised long ago; after his appointment to this high post, Clement continued to carry out his tasks with the same energy and wisdom, tasks that had been set by the ruler, the people and the epoch itself. Both in scale and in significance, his work occupied first place in the nation-wide creative process which was taking place all over Bulgaria. Prince Symeon, who realized the value of Clement's work and his great authority, refused to accept his resignation when he begged to be released from the heavy duties of a bishop.

Having fulfilled with honour his historical mission as teacher and preacher, and after a life of suffering and creative work, Clement of Ohrid died in 916, and was accorded a solemn burial by his grateful and respectful contemporaries.

TSVETANA GEORGIEVA

FATHER BOGOMIL

"It so happened that in the time of the Orthodox Tsar Peter, there appeared in the land of Bulgaria a priest named Bogomil, or, one should say, Bogunemil (not dear to God). He was the first to begin the preaching of heresy in the land of Bulgaria..."

From the discourse against the Bogomils by Presbyter Cozmas

The name of Father Bogomil is one which has reached us by way of several Medieval MSs, and is accompanied by the angry curses of those whose duty it was to strengthen the rule of the tsar, the church and feudal rulers over the oppressed and suffering people. Father Bogomil was the first to sow in the souls of his fellow-countrymen the seeds of disbelief in the dogmas of orthodox Christianity and to deny the divinity of the feudal system which so oppressed them. We know very little about the man who created a heresy which bore his own name, Bogomilism. The basic postulations of his teaching, however, are preserved in the large numbers of apocryphal books, legends and tales, and most of all in the essays of his opponents.

We do not know the date of birth of the man whose name has been cursed by the established church throughout the centuries. We do not know when he died, either. However, the writings of his opponents, imbued with anger and hatred, tell us when this first Bulgarian

heretic lived and preached. All sources unanimously indicate the time of the appearance of Bogomilism as the reign of Tsar Peter — son of Symeon the Great. This fact is of great use to contemporary historians, enabling them to discover the reasons for the creation and widespread propagation of Bogomilism, to trace its roots which, in spite of centuries of severe persecution, remained firmly embedded in the souls of the Bulgarian people.

The middle of the 10th century, when the heresy of Father Bogomil was born and spread all over Bulgaria, was an era in which the entire burden of the feudal system was deliberately placed upon the shoulders of the Bulgarian people, a system which newly-adopted Christianity had to sanction and strengthen. Almost half a century had passed since Prince Boris I forced his people to bow down to the Christian God. The pagan gods of their forefathers were still alive in the souls of the Bulgarians; they were cruel, barbarous gods, but they did not demand the submission of one man to another; they did not demand silence and obedience to a class which had laid the yoke of feudal exploitation on the backs of the people. The memory of pagan freedom was still fresh and clear. Fifty years was not long enough for paganism to fade from the minds of the Bulgarians. In spite of the determined efforts of the established church to eradicate it, it lived on for centuries. At this point we should mention the fact that the established church, powerless in the face of the people's love and devotion to their Slav gods, was compelled to turn them into Christian saints in order to be sure of the loyalty and submission of the newly-converted.

The generation of Bulgarians who lived at about the middle of the 10th century had no reason to forget the faith of their forefathers and to give their hearts and minds to the Christian God, because the Almighty Father and His Son, the lover of man, did not benefit the people in any way at all. The process of feudalization, which had commenced centuries ago, was developing rapidly. Two main classes emerged, whose status

and interests were diametrically opposed. The masses were gradually transformed from free people into serfs who were fully dependent on their masters. They scraped a bare living from a piece of land which belonged to the feudal ruler. For this reason they were obliged not only to perform many services to their lords, but also to give part of their produce to the ruler. In order that there should be a working force to cultivate the enormous lands of the feudal rulers, a number of the peasants were made serfs. Freedom and equality became a thing of the past. A small minority possessed vast tracts of land, and the right to exploit the peasants, to grow rich from their sweated labour. The central government upheld the power and dominion of the feudal class with all the means at its disposal. In Bulgaria, as in every other feudal state, the ruler was the leader of the feudal lords, the strongest and richest of the exploiters.

The new Christian religion was not only a catalyst which accelerated the process of feudalization. The adoption of Christianity was accompanied by the building of an all-embracing ecclesiastical institution. The Bulgarian church soon became the most powerful and demanding of all the feudal lords. The rulers, who considered the church to be an important factor in the establishment of the feudal system, granted to it large tracts of land and people to cultivate them. Many of the boyars, who were anxious to demonstrate that they had trampled the pagan gods underfoot and had sincerely embraced the faith of the new God, did not lag behind in this respect. Even the peasants set aside a part of the little they possessed in order to receive the blessing of the Almighty and perhaps to avoid the incursions of their earthly exploiters, naively relying on the humanity of the church. The priests and monks, however, soon forgot the example and preachings of the founders of the Bulgarian church and became the most cruel oppressors of peasants. Even Presbyter Cosmas, an ardent apologist of orthodox Christianity, who first took up his pen against the "vile" Bogomil heresy, was compelled to describe in detail the dissolution among the Bulgarian clergy and, horrified, to ask the following

question: "Who will tell of the cruelty inflicted by the monks on the helpless?"

In this way, the seeds of doubt were sown among the tender shoots of faith in the All-blessed and All-forgiving Christian God. Could this world, which was full of such terrible suffering and evil, really have been created by the perfect God? Why was this God totally deaf to the heart-rending pleas for order and justice of his most faithful worshippers? Could the One who had suffered on the cross for the human race be indifferent to the unbearable sufferings of the common people, who had been deprived of all their rights? Many questions of this kind troubled the Bulgarian peasant. He was sure that this cruel, imperfect world was the work not of God but of his sworn enemy, Satan; that the earth, people, society, the state and even the church were the work of the force of evil. That the Almighty had created only the human soul and that the visible world, with its burdens and brutality which the peasants knew belonged to Satan, that God ruled only the other world. The roots of Bogomilist dualism went very deep, originating from Asia Minor — that restless land which had given birth to so many heresies over the centuries, among them Manichaeism and the Paulician heresy. It seems that Father Bogomil had not only an excellent command of Orthodox dogma, but also of the Eastern heresies. The teaching he founded was not, however, a mere repetition of the denial of established religion that had come from the East; Bogomilism came into being under specifically Bulgarian conditions and developed mainly as a Bulgarian heretical teaching.

The Bogomils, who considered that the whole material world belonged to Satan, insisted that this was the source of all earthly power and that all rulers, including the tsar, were his servants. This was the reason why the Bogomils preached non-subordination to the ruler, boyars and all rich people, whom they considered to be in the service of the force of evil, and to have grown rich because of this. This aspect of the Bogomil teaching clearly shows that religious heresy was essentially an anti-feudal, class-conscious teaching directed

against those who supported the feudal system. It was this anti-feudal aspect which most alarmed representatives of the ruling class and provoked them to unremitting efforts to destroy the Bogomil movement.

It was not only the central government of the feudal rulers who were totally denounced by the Bulgarian heretics. The church organization and elaborate religious ritual was also denounced, together with the parasitic monks. The cross, baptism by water, communion and church weddings were declared to be inventions of the force of evil. Bogomilism possessed elements of rationalism which were quite exceptional for that era. The Bogomils did not believe in the miraculous powers of the holy relics, denied the immaculate conception and rejected the myth of the resurrection. We should mention the fact that at a much later date, Martin Luther rejected all these things, which are the foundation of the Christian religion, postulations which were rejected by Father Bogomil as early as the 10th century.

Bogomilism was not a mere denunciation, a barren criticism. The Bogomils created their own religious dogma on the basis of Christianity, had a moral and ethic code of their own, in which the principle of justice was foremost, and because it was quite obvious in the 10th century what a lot of evil lay in the roots of wealth, riches were entirely denounced. The lives of those who accepted the new teaching had to be modest and restrained, devoid of extravagance and unnecessary luxury. Such long-forgotten Christian axioms as "thou shalt not lie", "thou shalt not kill" "thou shalt not steal", and "love thy neighbour as thyself" were resurrected and became the basic principles of those who sought the religion of the "true God". The Bogomils utterly denounced war — the most common means of solving international problems at that time. They exhorted the peasants not to serve in the armies of the feudal lords. As an ideology, Bogomilism corresponded to the vital interests and aims of the peasants. This was the source of its strength, of the vitality which kept it alive for many centuries; but it was also a weakness

which did not permit it to become a truly revolutionary teaching to mobilize the masses.

Bogomilism was not just a theory. Its mass appeal led to the creation of an organization. Although the adherents of Bogomilism were scattered all over Bulgaria, they were in fact united in a single society which, in spite of repression and persecution, had a life of its own, subordinated to the basic requirements of Bogomil doctrine. This society was led by the First Teacher or Head. The first Head was, of course, the founder of the movement, Father Bogomil. His place was later taken by the worthiest of his disciples. The Head's closest assistants were known as apostles, because both in theory and in practice, the Bogomils adhered to the principles of Early Christianity. Because of the fact that the Bogomils were scattered all over Bulgaria, centres were set up in various districts which were known as *obshtini* (communities). An early source mentions four Bogomil centres. At a later date, when the teaching of Father Bogomil had spread beyond the boundaries of his country over the whole of the Balkan Peninsula, having penetrated as far as Northern Italy and Southern France, historical sources mention 16 *obshtini*.

The members of the *obshtina* were not on an equal footing as far as their duties were concerned. This inequality was not economic, but was determined by the extent to which individuals undertook to keep to all the postulations of the teaching and the norms of behaviour dictated by it. The first category in the Bogomil movement was that of the so-called "perfect ones". They were obliged to know in detail not only the dogmas of the Bogomil teaching, but the entire cosmogony, eschatology, theology and ethics of the Bogomils. The "perfect ones" swore to lead a celibate life and rejected all the seductions of the world. Their modesty was an example to the whole of the suffering Bulgarian peasantry. They had the difficult task of propagating the teaching and of organizing the life of the Bogomil communities.

Most of the Bogomils were ordinary adherents of the sect. They were not obliged to renounce the joys of life, but took an active part in the life of the *ob-*

shtina; their presence at the rituals, which consisted of public confession and the reading of the only prayer acknowledged by the Bogomils — the Lord's Prayer — was compulsory. Modesty and restraint were also required of these members of the *obshtina*.

The Bogomil organizations were not closed societies only for the chosen few, and those who had not been able to make a complete break with their former way of life, or were not fully convinced of the truth of the teaching, were also admitted; they were known as "students". They attended the sermons of the "perfect ones" and when they had found enough strength within themselves to stand up to the ascetic life of the Bogomils, they were admitted to the ranks of the believers by means of a special ritual. We must also mention the equal status of women in the Bogomil organizations, which was most unusual for that epoch. Women were considered to be the equals of men in the *obshtina*, and enjoyed the same rights, including that of admission to the highest rank — the "perfect ones". Perhaps this was due to the old Slav traditions which, under the conditions of feudalism had been suppressed and had completely disappeared under the pressure of the Christian code of ethics, which placed woman in a subordinate position.

Bogomilism existed in Bulgaria for many centuries, but it is difficult to determine how much of its theory and organization was the work of its founder, Father Bogomil, and how much was the fruit of the actual evolution of the teaching. Our sources of information are far too varied, both as far as time and origin are concerned, to enable us to reconstruct the nature of this protest against the existing feudal system in its earliest form. Without doubt, this movement had launched an attack against those who administered and supported the unjust social system of the time at the time of its foundation. This was the reason why its followers were subjected to continual persecution by church, boyars and tsar. Tsar Peter anxiously inquired of the Patriarch of Constantinople what steps he should take to prevent the spread of this new heresy. The lot of the majority

was, however, far too unbearable for their aspirations to find a juster way of life to be easily suppressed. Bogomilism spread very rapidly, winning more and more fervent adherents. The increased economic and national oppression of the period of Byzantine rule in Bulgaria gave a fresh impetus to the propagation of this heresy. The Byzantine emperors were also powerless. The cruel campaigns against the Bogomils launched by Alexis I Comnenus culminated in a trial in Constantinople in which the accused was their leader, Vassiliy. The terrible death of Vassiliy, who was burnt at the stake, but did not renounce his faith, served as an example of staunchness and valour to his many followers, who canonized him as a martyr. Bogomilism which had sunk deep roots in the hearts and minds of the people could not be eradicated by torture and persecutions. When the Bulgarians regained their independence and their country returned to its former glory, the Bogomil organization was as strong and vital as it had been in the preceding centuries, but the feudal system continued to exist in the Bulgarian state after its liberation from the Byzantines, and there was a fresh upsurge of Bogomilism. In 1211, the inhabitants of the capital Turnovo witnessed a Church Council called against the Bogomils and the cruel punishments that were afterwards inflicted on them. Historical sources inform us of other similar measures which were carried out with the same cruelty, but which also bore no result.

Bogomilism not only survived persecution in the land of its birth, but spread to Serbia, Rumania and even to Kievan Russia; there the teaching of Father Bogomil took root among the wretched and exploited peasantry. It also spread westwards — to France and Italy, where two new heretical movements were founded — the *Cathari* and the *Albigenses*, who took both their teaching and organization from the Bulgarians. These two movements survived the inhuman persecution of the Catholic church, and passed on to the Western world Bulgaria's denunciation of the established Christian church and Bulgarian rationalism, which was later to reappear in the work and preaching of Martin Luther.

Bogomilism in Bulgaria died out after the disappearance of the Bulgarian state. The horrors of the Ottoman conquest and the oppression of their feudal system made it necessary for the entire people to unite, in order to survive the long centuries of bondage which were to follow.

The existence over centuries of Father Bogomil's teaching is ample proof of the fact that the ideas and deeds of those who dedicate their knowledge, labour and life to their people are indestructible and immortal.

TSVETANA GEORGIEVA

TSAR SAMUIL

"And Samuïl became ruler of the whole of Bulgaria. This man, being warlike in character and unable to settle peacefully, seized an opportunity when Byzantine troops were engaged in battle with Varda Silir and laid waste the whole of the West — not only Thrace, Macedonia and the neighbourhood of Salonica, but also Thessaly, Hellas and the Peloponnesus".

From *The Chronicle of Johannes Scilitzes*

The last decades of the first ten centuries A. D., when the South-East had become the scene of long, fierce battles in which one of the most magnificent and tragic chapters in the history of the Bulgarian people was written, had passed. Byzantium had finally overcome her long series of internal crises and had decided to annihilate her northern neighbour. Bulgaria gathered all her forces in order to hold out against the immense pressure exerted by Byzantium and to preserve her independence. This was a battle which was to continue for many years. The tide turned in favour first of one side, then of the other; these events were dictated by two decisive and indefatigable military leaders — the Byzantine Emperor Basil II and the Bulgarian Tsar Samuïl.

Samuïl was not a member of the ruling class. He

ascended the throne at a most dramatic moment in his country's history, when her fate was in the balance. It was not the right of inheritance but the events of that time which placed him on the Bulgarian throne. Samuïl was one of the four sons of the governor of the Serdica district — the Comes Nikola. In 971, the Byzantine Emperor John Tzimisces led his troops through the passes of the Balkan Range into East Bulgarian territory and captured Preslav. In order to destroy the alliance between the Bulgarians and the Russians of Svetoslav, he did not declare that he intended to destroy Bulgaria and made it look as if he was coming to save her from her Slav allies. His diplomatic manoeuvre was successful and the Russo-Bulgarian alliance was destroyed. This was a great triumph for John Tzimisces. He put an end to Bulgaria as such, and the Bulgarian Tsar Boris II and his brother Roman were among the long columns of prisoners that were taken to Constantinople.

Events in Western Bulgaria, however, took a turn which was quite unexpected for the Byzantines. The Emperor had no real reason to celebrate because his troops had not penetrated West Bulgarian territory at all. When Bulgaria's lawful ruler was taken away as a prisoner to Constantinople, rule of the free districts was undertaken by the four sons of the Comes Nikola — David, Moses, Aaron and Samuïl. Other Bulgarians from the parts captured by the Byzantines fled to this area. The Patriarch Damyan also found refuge there, and again took up his duties — in Sredets instead of Preslav. The four brothers did not remain indifferent to the fate of East Bulgaria. They actively aided the oppressed population, and after a successful uprising led by Peter and Boyan, Bulgaria was again united.

The four brothers reinforced their position in the newly liberated areas and increased the pressure on the Byzantines in the South. After a long siege, Serres and the great fortress of Larissa in Thessaly fell into Bulgarian hands. The two elder sons of the Comes Nikola — David and Moses — perished in the battle with the Byzantines, but Samuïl and Aaron continued the

campaign successfully. The Byzantines, in order to provoke internal strife, sent the two sons of Peter, who were the lawful heirs to the throne to Bulgaria. Their escape was organized, and Boris and Roman reached the Bulgarian border unhindered. Boris II was killed by a stray arrow, but Roman reached Voden. Byzantine diplomats waited in vain for news of bloodshed at the Bulgarian court. The sons of the Comes were wise and far-seeing; particularly the younger son, Samuïl. Roman was accorded a reception worthy of a tsar and officially acknowledged as ruler of Bulgaria. Affairs of state, however, did not really interest Roman, who had been maimed at the Byzantine court; indeed they were beyond his strength. He totally immersed himself in religion, and the fate of Bulgaria remained in the strong hands of Samuïl.

Byzantium, which had failed in the use of diplomacy, declared open war. Basil II led thousands of troops westwards towards the great Bulgarian fortress of Sredets. This campaign was the start of a fierce duel in which the question of Bulgaria's existence was to be decided. The start was tragic not for the Bulgarians but for the Byzantines; Sredets proved to be an impregnable fortress, and the Byzantine withdrawal to Philippopolis was the bitterest defeat that Basil II had experienced in his life. This was also one of the heaviest defeats in Byzantium's history. The Bulgarians, led by Samuïl, lay in wait for the Byzantine army in the Pass of the Iron Gates (near the present-day town of Ihtiman), and the latter perished in the mountain pass. The Emperor managed to escape only due to the self-sacrifice of his bodyguard. Memories of this defeat long haunted the minds of Byzantine chroniclers and poets, and the heart of Basil II was filled with a burning ambition to take his revenge at any price and to destroy Bulgaria.

Samuïl, inspired by this great success, prepared for a new campaign — this time towards Thrace, in order to free the local Bulgarian population from Byzantine rule. Byzantium was conscious of the fact that she was powerless to halt this advance and again had recourse

to slander and cunning. The elder son of the Comes, Aaron, became involved in Byzantine intrigues and agreed to give support to the Emperor by killing his brother. Samuïl, however, learnt of Aaron's treacherous intentions, and a cruel and terrible episode from our history took place in the palace near Razmetanitsa. Aaron and the whole of his family were executed on the orders of Samuïl.

Samuïl's revenge was indeed a cruel one, and many people condemned it. This act, however, was proof of a directness and consistency which were typical of all that he did. It was quite clear to Samuïl that only firmness and lack of compromise would ensure his success in the mortal duel with Byzantium.

When various internal problems had been solved with severity and fairness, Samuïl again led his troops southwards towards the lands which had been populated by Slavs for centuries. The Byzantines were powerless, although they succeeded in capturing the Bulgarian tsar, Roman, and when, several years after his capture news of his death reached Samuïl, the latter was crowned as Tsar of the Bulgarians.

The Bulgarian campaigns did not cease. Their troops, who had penetrated deeply into Byzantine territory, reached Hellas and the Peloponnesus. All attempts by Byzantine strategists to halt the Bulgarian advance failed. But Samuïl's good fortune deserted him on his return. Byzantium, which was frightened by his successes, took decisive measures and appointed Nicephorus Uran as military leader — a man who had lived through many battles. The two armies confronted one another on the banks of the River Sperhei and were separated by the river, which was in full flood. Samuïl allowed his troops, who were tired after the long campaign, to rest but Nicephorus Uran succeeded in crossing the river under cover of night and attacked the sleeping Bulgarians. The battle that ensued was a short one in which most of Samuïl's troops perished. He himself was wounded and managed to escape with the aid of his son, Gavraïl Radomir.

The Emperor was convinced that this victory would

bring about the complete submission of Bulgaria, but this was not to be. Samuïl again marshalled his forces, and while the Emperor was engaged in fighting the Arabs to the East, prepared for battle. After a short lapse of time, Samuïl again set out with his troops — this time to the west, towards the Serbs, because as a result of new Byzantine intrigues they were preparing to attack Bulgaria. Samuïl was a far-seeing statesman and correctly judged that if he did not put an end to this threat at a time when there was no danger from Byzantium, he would be exposing himself to an attack from the rear at a later date. His campaign, which was a lightning one, was successful and Serbia was subjugated to the might of the Bulgarian tsar.

Samuïl was a good diplomat; using a great deal of tact he won the Transylvanian ruler Aiton over to his side and removed the danger of an eventual conflict with the Magyars, which could have been brought about by a divorce of his son, Gavraïl Radomir, from the Hungarian princess, Margarita.

Bulgaria, her strength renewed, again confronted the Byzantine Empire. The duel which had lasted for decades entered its decisive phase. The two sides realized that this would decide which of them would continue to exist. The renewed attacks went in favour first of one side, then the other. Basil II acted with extreme cruelty. When he succeeded in winning lands populated with Bulgarians, he resettled them elsewhere, and the population of the fortresses, who stubbornly resisted his attacks, were massacred.

In the year 1001, a vast Byzantine army again marched through the passes of the Balkan Range. Byzantine power was again established in East Bulgarian territory — this time for almost two centuries. This success encouraged the Emperor, and Byzantine troops advanced westwards towards Serdica, Voden and Berrhoea. The Bulgarians again demonstrated immense patriotism. The fortresses which had recently been captured by the Byzantines immediately broke away from their new rulers, and at the risk of losing their lives for betraying the Emperor, allied themselves

with the Bulgarian state. Byzantium had not only to deal with the talent and skill of the great military leader, Samuïl, but with the desire for freedom of a whole people. This nation-wide resistance fanned the flames of Basil's ambitions to an even greater extent. In 1003, the Byzantine army advanced far to the north and surrounded the Bulgarian fortress of Vidin on the River Danube. Months of siege followed. In order to distract his opponent's attention, Samuïl led his army into Thrace and captured Adrianople. Vidin, however, could not hold out, and in the autumn, Basil II was handed the keys of the fortress, after which the Byzantine army set off southwards towards Skopje. The Bulgarians were again defeated in the spring of 1004 on the banks of the River Vardar. The Emperor had no doubts of the outcome of this fierce struggle, but an unsuccessful attempt to capture Pernik seemed to damp his hopes and the Byzantine army set off for Constantinople.

The next ten years were to bring no peace to the Bulgarians. The fighting continued, although not so fiercely. The Byzantines were defeated at Salonica, but Samuïl's son-in-law, Ashot, handed the great fortress of Dyrrhachium over to the enemy without resistance. The victories and defeats continued until the year 1014.

Basil II led a massive army towards the heart of Samuïl's possessions — Stroumitsa. Samuïl, who had been warned about this campaign, set up a strong barricade at Klyuch. In spite of many attacks, the Byzantines were unable to overcome Bulgarian resistance. At last, however, a Byzantine detachment made a detour to reach the other side of the mountain and attacked the Bulgarians from the rear. The Bulgarian army was defeated. Basil took fifteen thousand prisoners with him. The Emperor behaved with unprecedented cruelty and blinded all fifteen thousand of them and sent them back to their leader, Samuïl, leaving one man in every hundred with one eye — to lead the others. Fifteen thousand blind men marched through the mountains and eventually reached the capital of their state.

For Samuïl the experience was a terrible one, quite unparalleled in the history of the world. The blow was fatal and three days later, on October 6, 1014, this untiring and self-sacrificing champion of Bulgaria's freedom passed away. The state he had led did not survive him by many years. In the year 1018, Basil II crushed the resistance of the last Bulgarian fortress.

TSVETANA GEORGIEVA

TSAR KALOYAN

"Another scourge, much more terrible now, threatened the Byzantines. The Moesian (Bulgarian) Ioannes, who proved to be both an enemy and filled with a desire for revenge against the Byzantines handed over to be plundered by the Scythians all settlements near to Byzantium, because they had paid taxes to the Latins!"

From the *Chronicle of Nicetas Choniates*

In the autumn of 1187, Bulgaria joyously celebrated her resurrection. The sound of church bells in her new capital, Turnovo, spread the glad tidings of the coronation of Assen, the new Tsar of the Bulgarians, in the Church of St Demetrius. Bulgaria was entering a happier period of her history. The uprising, which had swept all lands to the north of the Haemus at the beginning of 1185, had been successful. All efforts on the part of Byzantium to crush the signs of discontent that had been fermenting in Bulgaria over two centuries of Byzantine oppression were repulsed under the leadership of the two brothers, Assen and Peter. Byzantium was forced to recognize the rebirth of the Bulgarian state with the signing of a peace treaty in 1187. This joy was to be a short-lived one, however. Separatism, which was an inevitable feature of every feudal society, was making its presence felt in the young Bulgarian state. Two boyars' plots put an end to the lives of the men who

had led their people to freedom. Assen and Peter were killed by the swords of short-sighted and selfish boyars. Byzantium did not remain indifferent to these murders, because the murderer of Assen found not only asylum, but gratitude and recognition there.

Ten years after the coronation in Turnovo, in 1197, the throne was handed over to the younger brother of Assen and Peter. His name was Ioanitsa, but his contemporaries called him Kaloyan — the good Ioannes, for in a matter of ten years, with unremitting efforts, he succeeded not only in consolidating what had been achieved in the preceding years, but in restoring Bulgaria's former glory. The many victories of Bulgarian arms and brilliant diplomacy made Bulgaria once again the dominant power in South-East Europe.

Kaloyan had not played a direct role in leading the national uprising in the 1160s, because he was then a mere youth, but his fate had always been connected with that of the young Bulgaria. When the Byzantines recognized Bulgaria's independence, they demanded the youngest of the brothers as a hostage. Kaloyan spent many years in Constantinople, but these years did not pass in vain; he saw and learnt a great deal, and realized that Bulgaria's future depended on the struggle being continued until those Bulgarians who lived under Byzantine oppression were restored to their homeland.

When Kaloyan took the reins of power into his hands, he worked unremittingly and systematically to bring this great idea to pass. At first, he directed his efforts towards Bulgaria's internal affairs; all separatist movements among the Bulgarian boyars were suppressed with tact and firmness. A dynastic marriage ensured him the co-operation of the Cumanian* cavalry and his diplomatic skill won him the friendship of his former enemies — the separatist boyar, Dobromir Hriz, and the disenchanted murderer of Assen, Ivanko. Kaloyan had a strong personality and his love of Bulgaria was very great; this is proved by the fact that he even managed to overcome his hatred for his brother's murderer in order to strengthen his state.

* A turkic people

At the end of the 13th century, confident of his country's strength, he again took up the struggle with Byzantium. Huge Cumanian detachments invaded Thrace to plunder, and to distract the attention of the Byzantine army. In the meantime, Kaloyan led his troops towards the great fortress of Konstantsia in the Rhodopes and captured it. Without a single day's rest, he quite unexpectedly led his army eastwards towards the Black Sea coast, because the Varna fortress, which was of exceptional importance, was still in enemy hands. Thousands of troops assembled beneath the walls, armed with siege-weapons, the like of which had never been seen. The guards were defenceless in the face of the power and enthusiasm of the Bulgarians. Having removed the danger in Moesia, Kaloyan should have been able to direct all his efforts at Thrace and Macedonia, to unite his fellow-countrymen on the borders of the Bulgarian state. He was, however, hindered by events that were taking place with great rapidity in the West.

For more than a century, Europe had lived under the banner of the crusades. The drive for the "liberation of Jerusalem" had drawn in its wake the restless elements of the whole of Western Europe — landless knights, fanatical priests, adventurers in search of easy gain. These were accompanied by masses of peasants whose utter poverty had become unbearable. By the 12th century, three waves of crusaders had flooded South-East Europe on their way to Jerusalem, leaving behind them nothing but ruin. At that time, when the West was preparing for a fourth crusade, the situation in the Balkans could not be expected to take a turn for the better. This time it seemed that the crusaders were aiming not at Jerusalem, but at Constantinople, the fabulously rich capital of the ancient Byzantine Empire. Tsar Kaloyan knew perfectly well what the fate of his people would be if the army of crusaders was allowed to pass through Bulgaria. The lands along the great road which connected Constantinople with Western Europe were Bulgarian. One of the leaders of the crusade, the Hungarian Prince Emerich, made no attempt to con-

ceal his ambitions as far as these lands were concerned. Kaloyan tried to find a way of diverting this wave of destruction. He was well aware of Pope Innoncent III's ambitions to influence the course of events in the East; for the Pope was one of the main instigators of the campaign. Kaloyan began a series of complicated diplomatic manoeuvres which were crowned with success.

Kaloyan, who had long remained indifferent to the Pope's attempts to establish contact with the Bulgarians, unexpectedly sent a mission to Rome, because he realized that in spite of the many contradictions that existed between the organizers, preparations for the fourth crusade were nearing their climax. The Pope must have been amazed when the Bulgarian ruler not only extended his hand in friendship, but also acknowledged the throne of St. Peter, begging for recognition of his state. The Pope, overjoyed, quickly replied to Kaloyan's letter. A long, extremely courteous correspondence began, in which the two skilled diplomats pursued their own, contradictory aims. Kaloyan accepted the proposal for unity with Catholic Rome on condition that the head of the Bulgarian church should be granted the rank of patriarch and that the head of state should receive the title of Tsar. The Vatican, however, either could not or did not wish to grant anyone the rank of patriarch, because according to their laws, the Western church could have only one head, and that was the Pope. It could not confer the title of Tsar, either, because this was identical with Emperor, and among the mediaeval rulers, only two bore this title, the Byzantine Emperor and the German Emperor. The Pope knew perfectly well that Kaloyan's demands were designed to guarantee the total independence of Bulgaria, and that the act of unity that had been prepared would be of no value. In order not to lose the support of the Bulgarians which he had awaited for so long and which was so necessary to him, the Pope offered the rank of archbishop to the head of their church and that of king to the head of state. When, however, in 1204, Kaloyan solemnly signed the act of unity, quite unexpectedly for the Pope, he had himself crowned as Tsar, pretending that he did

not understand the subtleties of the European hierarchy. And while couriers were rushing to and fro between Turnovo and Rome, events developed with a speed which was quite unusual for the Middle Ages.

Preparations for the Fourth Crusade were completed, and this time it was quite obvious that the crusaders were aiming at Constantinople. The Emperor sought an ally in the Bulgarians, offering them that which they had up till then stubbornly refused — official recognition. Kaloyan, however, did not accept this alliance, because the political situation was quite clear and the fall of the Empire was inevitable. In the spring of 1204, the crusaders set off not for Palestine, but towards the Bosphorus, and on April 17 of the same year, Constantinople was already in their hands. The great Empire disappeared from the map and only a few small Greek principalities remained as a reminder of the glory of the past. Those who had intended to liberate Jerusalem declared their possessions as a new Empire, the Latin Empire, and Baldwin, Duke of Flanders, was chosen as Emperor.

Kaloyan considered that the signing of the act of unity would guarantee the safety of Bulgaria from two standpoints — from the West, as his former enemy Prince Emerich of Hungary was forced by the Pope to keep peace with Bulgaria — and from the South, because his new neighbours, the Latins, could not show hostility towards a Catholic Bulgaria. He was wrong, however. The Latins, carried away by their successes, haughtily rejected his proposal for peaceful coexistence, and also claimed his lands, using as an argument the former possession of Bulgaria by the Byzantine Empire, declaring, themselves to be the heirs of the latter. Kaloyan picked up the gauntlet cast down by the knights and relations between the two states rapidly deteriorated; war was not far away. The Pope made vain attempts to persuade the two sides to come to terms. Kaloyan remained deaf to his pleas, and the Act of Unity with Rome was in fact annulled. It was not loyalty to the Catholic church that guided Kaloyan in his talks with Rome, but a wish to ensure peace for his people

by diplomatic means. When the greed and unscrupulousness of the crusaders became evident, he no longer had need of the Act of Unity, and as the ruined towns of Thrace were filled with a spirit of rebellion against the new rulers, Kaloyan extended his hand in friendship to the rebels. Bulgarian troops headed eastwards towards Thrace. The frightened crusaders led their armies towards the towns which had risen in rebellion. The crusader army reached Adrianople and surrounded the city, preparing to capture it. It was then that the Bulgarians made an unexpected appearance. Kaloyan was well aware that war was the profession of the Western knights and that his opponents were great masters of their profession, and for this reason planned the forthcoming battle with the greatest care. With the aid of a detachment of Cumanians, he lured the Latins into a well prepared ambush. The crusaders suffered a heavy defeat. Hundreds of troops and a large number of their prominent military leaders were killed and Baldwin of Flanders himself was taken prisoner. This took place on April 14, 1205, a date which was long to be remembered by the Latin Empire, after which it was unable to make a full recovery. This was a great day indeed for Kaloyan and the Bulgarians; not only did the rare gifts of their ruler as a military leader, and the skill of his troops become evident, but the aggressive intentions of the Western knights were nipped in the bud and the Slavs in South-East Europe were saved from a terrible danger.

The Pope, who was anxious about the fate of the Latin Empire, something that he had created with so much care and effort, made all efforts to secure its continued existence, but Kaloyan paid no attention to his pitiful pleas. The Pope insisted that the new Latin Emperor, Henry I, should begin peace talks with the Bulgarians, but the Bulgarian Tsar, who had already displayed his gifts as a statesman and the might of his army, did not entertain for a moment the idea of making peace with the Latins. He knew very well that the crusaders from the West could only bring ill to the Balkan peoples and, confident of his strength, had decided

to put an end to the Latin Empire. The blow inflicted at the battle of Adrianople was to be the beginning of the end.

The Latins had brought with them the feudal disunion of Western Europe and divided their new state into many duchies and principalities. The Duchy of Salonica, which was the possession of the leader of the fourth crusade, Boniface of Montferrat, broke away from Constantinople after April 1205. In order to consolidate his success at Adrianople, Kaloyan directed the next blow against Salonica. Having overcome the defenders of Serres, the Bulgarian army set off rapidly to the South. Bulgaria's former possessions were again restored to her. Kaloyan had some doubts about the successful outcome of his campaign because the walls of Salonica were stout, and decided that if he wanted to be sure of a victory, he would have to double the number of his troops; and having left garrisons in the newly-liberated lands, returned northwards with his army. Perhaps the news of the betrayal of the Greek aristocracy from the Thracian towns and the disputes among the ruling circles at Turnovo compelled him to halt his campaign to the South. Both the Bulgarian plotters and the Thracian Greeks felt the severity of Kaloyan's punishment. Order was restored in the country and in the winter of 1206, Bulgarian troops again emerged onto the field of battle. The efforts of the crusaders to resist were crushed at the walls of the Roussillon Fortress. The Bulgarians and the Cumanians, with one success after another, reached the walls of Constantinople.

The Byzantine aristocrats, frightened by the might of their old enemy, Bulgaria, presumed that the crusaders would quit the South-East after their defeat at Adrianople, and for this reason preferred to find a common language with them in order to hinder Kaloyan. Even this unnatural alliance, however, was not able to hinder the Bulgarians from finishing what they had begun. Bulgarian troops and Cumanian horse set off towards one of the strongest fortresses in Thrace, Dymotichon. They beseiged the fortress, and it seemed that the latter would capitulate. It was only the arrival of La-

tin troops and the danger of being trapped between the knights and the defenders of the fortress that forced the Bulgarians to retreat. This was only a temporary retreat, however, for Kaloyan captured Dymotichon in the autumn.

It was in 1207 that tension in South-East Europe reached its height. Both sides felt that the time had come for the decisive battle that would determine the fate of the Empire that had begun to wither almost at the time of its foundation. The danger that threatened them forced the Emperor Henry and Boniface of Montferrat to overcome their differences and join forces.

The Bulgarians made intensive preparations for the big battle, and while various detachments made sorties into enemy territory to cause alarm and despondency, a large army was assembled in the lands to the north of the Haemus. The Latins repulsed a Bulgarian advance towards Adrianople, but their success was marred by the defeat of Boniface who was killed by a Bulgarian detachment returning from an engagement with the Emperor near Salonica.

In the summer, Kaloyan's well-trained army set off southwards towards Salonica. In August, they reached the walls of the city and a carefully planned siege that should have brought them success began. It looked as if the fate of Salonica was decided.

Here before the walls of Salonica, however, a disgraceful affair that had its origins far to the north — in Turnovo — came to a head. Neither the immense achievements nor the growing prestige of the Bulgarians were able to stifle separatist forces among the Bulgarian feudal aristocracy, because Kaloyan's iron hand to a great extent limited the selfish ambitions of a large part of the ruling class. These members of the ruling class united in a plot, the threads of which were woven in Kaloyan's palace. Later events showed that Kaloyan's nephew Boril and his own wife — a member of the Cumanian tribe — had been involved in this. It is possible that Kaloyan the warrior, strategist and statesman, had underestimated the degree to which a wife can be unfaithful. Perhaps, utterly absorbed in fulfilling his

great task, he had not noticed that this unfaithfulness had united all the forces of evil in his country. The man who carried out the command of the evil plotters in Turnovo was the cousin of Kaloyan's wife — the Cumanian military leader, Manastur. One night he crept unnoticed into the Tsar's tent and his sword pierced a heart that had all its life been filled with boundless love for Bulgaria. Kaloyan shouted out the name of his murderer and died. His warriors carried the bloodstained body of their Tsar from distant Salonica to Turnovo, and the people of Bulgaria, stricken with terrible grief, bade farewell to one of their greatest rulers.

Kaloyan's reign was a short one, but it left its mark in the history of Bulgaria. He had succeeded not only in increasing the authority and prestige of his young state and making it into the leading force on the Balkan Peninsula, but also in bringing a large part of the Bulgarian population within its borders. The defeat of the Latin Empire at Adrianople destroyed the Catholic threat to South-East Europe and secured its independence.

TSVETANA GEORGIEVA

TSAR IVAN ASSEN II

"Teodor was totally defeated by the Bulgarians and the Scythians and was himself taken prisoner by the enemy... Ivan Assen was, however, charitably disposed towards the army he had captured, and freed most of the troops..."

From the *Chronicle* of Georgius Acropolites

In the troubled summer of 1207, when the Bulgarians were mourning the sudden and untimely death of Kaloyan, and anxiously wondering what would happen to their state under the rule of the usurper Boril, a small group of horsemen were galloping northwards. Far-seeing boyars, who had been filled with forebodings as far as the intentions of the new tsar were concerned, were taking two children — Ivan Assen and Alexander, the sons of Tsar Assen I, who were the rightful heirs to the throne, to the Russian principalities. While the man who had been placed on the throne by the boyars in Bulgaria, a man who utterly lacked statesmanship, destroyed in a decade all that had been so painstakingly achieved before, the exiled princes were growing into men and preparing to take back that which belonged to them by right.

After ten years' exile, in 1217, Assen's two sons set out for Bulgaria, leading a small but loyal army of Bulgarians and Russians. It seemed as if Boril, whose in-

competency in both military affairs and statesmanship, had long ago become evident, wished to compensate for his failures in foreign policy by cruelly oppressing the people. Boril, who was a mere puppet in the hands of evilly-intentioned boyars was hated by his subjects and for this reason they accorded a joyful reception to the army of the lawful heir to the throne, seeing in the latter someone who would return Bulgaria to her former glory and continue the work of the Assenids. In a very short period, Boril's possessions were limited to the capital of Turnovo. After a short siege, the people of Turnovo themselves opened the gates. Boril, who was despised and hated by his people, was unable to escape and was punished in the way he deserved, paying the price for harbouring ambitions that were beyond his capabilities. One of the murderers of Kaloyan was blinded before a delighted crowd.

The elder of the sons of Assen, Ivan Assen, was crowned Tsar of the Bulgarians. His heritage was not an enviable one. Bulgaria had lost her supremacy in South-East Europe, a supremacy that had been achieved by the first rulers of the Second Bulgarian Tsardom. The areas on the Western border — Belgrade and Brannichevo — were in Magyar hands. The lands south of the Haemus had been captured by the Latins, and the South-Western regions had been included in the Despoty of Epirus. In Bulgaria itself, Bogomilism was becoming ever more popular among the peasants who had been oppressed and exploited for a decade. It seems that the pogroms organized by Boril had only increased the spread of this heresy.

The political situation in the South-East was extremely complex. The Latin Empire had never fully recovered from the blow dealt it by Kaloyan in 1205, and only preserved its authority because of the efforts of the Vatican and the might of the Venetian fleet. Even in the West, however, no one seriously hoped that this Empire, which had been created and maintained with so much effort, would exist for very long. The Empire of Nicaea, which was astutely ruled by Theodore I Lascaris and his son, Ioannes Dukas Vatatzes, marshalled

enough forces to bring about a long-cherished dream — to turn their insignificant little state in Asia Minor, which was one of the last remainders of the former glory of the Byzantine Empire into a second Byzantine Empire, to expand their borders to the former borders of Byzantium. They might well have succeeded, for a series of military actions showed that the Latin knights were not capable of holding the territories in their possession. They soon clashed with another Byzantine state, however, the Despotat of Epirus, which was ruled by the energetic and far-sighted Theodore Comnenus. The Serbs were also preparing to make their entry onto the stage of international politics. In South-East Europe events were coming to a head, which were to be of crucial importance for the future of this area.

All who know something of the history of Bulgaria in the first half of the 13th century must acknowledge the exceptional foresight of its Tsar, Ivan Assen II, his gift of understanding not only the requirements of that era, but of fulfilling these requirements unerringly.

The very first political acts undertaken by Ivan Assen II proved his foresight: a peaceful but purposeful policy, in which the military power of the country could be felt, was highly suitable for the chaotic and complex situation which reigned in that part of the world. The Bulgarian ruler managed to regain the Belgrade and Branichevo territories lost by Boril. He was given these lands as a dowry by the Hungarian King Andrew II, whose daughter he had married after an incident which was fully in keeping with the spirit of the times. Ivan Assen II ordered that the Magyar ruler, who was passing through Bulgarian territory, should be detained. The frightened and astonished king was told that he would be given his freedom if he gave his daughter, Anna, in marriage to the Bulgarian Tsar. When the wedding celebrations in Turnovo were over, Bulgaria's western territories had been restored to her. This was followed by the reunification of former Bulgarian territories to the North of the Danube. Having captured Adrianople from Ioannes Vatatzes, Ivan Assen easily regained Bulgarian territories in Eastern Thrace. The

successes of the Nicaeans showed that a conflict between the two Byzantine states was inevitable. The enterprising Despot of Epirus, who needed allies, turned to Ivan Assen II for help. Another dynastic marriage, this time between the daughter of the Tsar, Maria, and Manuel, brother of Theodore Comnenus, consolidated the political alliance between Bulgaria and the Despotat of Epirus. The Tsar, who was not engaged in military conflicts, concentrated on strengthening his state, which had been severely shaken by Boril's rule. Although he was flexible and not particularly active as far as foreign policy was concerned, he pursued a firm and consistent line in his home policy. Only in this way could he if not uproot, at least stifle the separatist elements among the boyars. Law and order was restored in Bulgaria, and this undoubtedly improved the lot of the ordinary people. Ivan Assen II, with great foresight, wisdom and statesmanship, led his country into the period which was to be the height of her greatness.

The results of his far-sighted rule soon became evident; all this took place without spectacular victories and unnecessary bloodshed, and Bulgaria became, if not the leading state, at least the equal of the others. The Latin Empire, which was approaching its end, threatened by the Byzantine states which, although they were rivals, were strong, realized that it would only be able to withstand the blow to come if it relied on the might of Bulgaria. Ivan Assen II remained true to his policy and entered into an alliance with the Latins; their 11-year-old Emperor, Baldwin II, was betrothed to the Bulgarian princess Elena. Tsar Ivan Assen II was proclaimed the guardian of the young ruler of Constantinople, to whom he not only promised his support but undertook to reconquer the western territories that he had lost. The forthcoming marriage was a hint of the leading role that Bulgaria was to play in the affairs of the Balkan Peninsula. It became clear that yet another claimant had appeared for the Latin heritage, and a vital and powerful one at that, whose strength had not been wasted in battles. The remaining Balkan rulers were well aware of the results of Bulgaria's policies

and the threat posed by its consistency. The forthcoming marriage between the daughter of Ivan Assen would inevitably bring the Bulgarian Tsar that which the rulers of the Nicaean Empire and the Despotat of Epirus had long desired. This wedding would make Ivan Assen *de facto* ruler of the lands belonging to the Latin Empire. There was only one short step to go to the actual imposition of Bulgarian rule in Constantinople. Tsar Ivan Assen II was about to realize the great dream of Symeon the Great — to possess Constantinople and to create a huge Slav-Byzantine Empire. Many historians consider that the period of Byzantine rule interrupted Bulgaria's natural development, that there was a lack of continuity between the policies of the new Bulgarian state and the policy pursued by Asparouh, Boris and Symeon. The actions of Ivan Assen, however, make this theory a doubtful one. It is true that they can be explained by his strong sense of reality, but this was not so much expressed in the basic conception of his policy — the inclusion of all Slavs of Bulgarian origin in the Bulgarian state — as in the means by which he went about realizing his aim. While Symeon had consistently pursued a policy of force, Ivan Assen II sought to realize his ambitions by means of diplomacy. All his actions up to that time show that he kept a close watch on developments in the neighbouring countries, that he was acquainted with the plans and ambitions of their rulers, and knew that his swift and stable prosperity would soon be disputed. As his treaty with the Latins adversely affected the interests of his ally, Theodore Comnenus, Ivan Assen knew from where the next blow would come, but was not in a hurry to inflict this blow himself. The Bulgarian ruler was first and foremost a diplomat, and for this reason was well aware of the fact that events would take a turn for the worse for the country that would be the first to break the peace treaty. He left this unpleasant task to his former ally Theodore Comnenus. As almost always happens in such cases, his patience yielded the result he had expected. Theodore Comnenus was unable to wait any longer and sent a large army towards Bulgaria. Ivan Assen II was waiting for him on

the plain near Klokotnitsa. Chroniclers tell us that the peace treaty that had been broken by the Epirotes was hung on the Bulgarian standard. Over the past twelve years of his reign, Ivan Assen II had shown his gifts as a skilful diplomat and far-sighted politician, and at Klokotnitsa he demonstrated his skill in battle. The Epirotes army was defeated, and Theodore Comnenus and his family were captured. This took place on March 9, 1230. The defeat of the Epirotes army was also the end of the Despotat of Epirus, which became part of Bulgaria. Many people consider that this battle alone brought Bulgaria to the peak of her greatness. This, however, was the result of many years of patient and consistent efforts. Ivan Assen II did not owe this victory only to his skill on the field of battle; the territory of Theodore Comnenus was mainly inhabited by Bulgarians, who accorded his victorious army a joyful reception. The non-Bulgarian part of the population did not resist, either, because after his victory, the Bulgarian ruler behaved in a way which was most unusual for the Middle Ages. He held the Despot and his military leaders prisoner, but accorded them the respect due to their rank, and freed all the troops he had captured. This act had an immense moral effect. The whole of South-East Europe began to speak of the "good Bulgarian Tsar" — a reputation which Ivan Assen II preserved for many centuries.

After the Battle of Klokotnitsa, the Bulgarian state covered a huge territory — from the River Olta in the North to the shores of the Mediterranean and Adriatic seas in the South. Bulgarian governors were appointed in the newly-conquered areas, and local rulers who showed a tolerant attitude towards the victors were allowed to keep their lands. Bulgaria, which was now huge as far as territory was concerned, politically strong and united nationally, now enjoyed a supremacy which was disputed by no one in South-East Europe. The remaining Balkan states not only recognized Bulgaria's greatness, but made every effort to win the favour of the Bulgarian Tsar. The Latins in Constantinople saw in him their one and only defender in South-

East Europe, and the Serbs even made a dynastic change in order not to incur Bulgarian disfavour. In order to strengthen his throne, the Serbian ruler Vladislav asked for the hand of one of the many Bulgarian princesses in marriage.

Ivan Assen II was far-sighted, and was not carried away by his victory at Klokotnitsa. He had learnt from history that that which is achieved by force of arms does not last if it is not consolidated with a wise and invigorating internal policy. He directed his efforts at strengthening the foundations of his state, which covered an extremely large territory. But he needed peace to carry out his plans. Since none of his neighbours wanted their good relationship with Bulgaria to be spoiled, and did nothing that could have this effect, they all lived in peace for many years. The Bulgarian ruler travelled over his huge territories and showed great generosity to churches and monasteries; he was well aware of the important role played by the church in the society in which he lived. Relics of his time and the results of archaeological excavations show that a great deal of building took place in Bulgaria in the reign of Ivan Assen II, particularly in Turnovo, the capital. These new churches and civic buildings gave the city an image befitting the capital of such a great state. The crafts flourished in peaceful Bulgaria. Her trade, in which foreign, mainly Dubrovnik merchants were partners, developed rapidly. Ivan Assen II was the first Bulgarian ruler to mint money. Magnificent murals were painted in the new churches. Books were written and illustrated with miniatures, the exquisite workmanship and precision of which are admired to this day.

The rulers of the neighbouring countries, however, although their attitudes appeared to be particularly friendly, regarded Bulgaria's meteoric rise to greatness with trepidation. It was the barons of Constantinople who first made their objections public. They were well aware of the fact that for Ivan Assen the act of unity concluded between the Vatican and Kaloyan was of no real value, and the rising greatness of his state meant

the end of the Latin Empire. Apart from this, his guardianship of Baldwin II undermined their influence in the government of the country. A treaty was signed in conditions of the greatest secrecy in the Italian town of Perugia with the active support of the Pope, under the terms of which the guardianship of the young Emperor was handed over to Jean de Brienne, King of Jerusalem; the latter was granted the title of Emperor, and the hand of his daughter was promised to Baldwin. Ivan Assen, who only realized that he had been tricked three years later, angrily tore up the Act of Unity. The Catholic world reacted to this with a Magyar invasion of Bulgaria, which was quickly repulsed by the Tsar's brother, Alexander.

The breaking-off of relations with the Latin Empire gave rise to an alliance between Bulgaria and Nicaea. Vataztes sought an ally to aid him in his struggle with Constantinople, and Ivan Assen needed the recognition of the Patriarch of Turnovo on the part of the other Eastern churches. The treaty was strengthened by the betrothal of the Bulgarian Princess Elena to the son of Vataztes, Theodore Lascaris. The princess was sent to the court of her future father-in-law in order to be brought up in the Byzantine manner. The two sides decided how they would divide up the territory of the Latin Empire, and this should have been followed by the consummation of these plans. The military actions, however, did not proceed as the allies thought they would; they were unable to break through the defences of Constantinople, and the coming winter forced them to withdraw.

In the meanwhile, Ivan Assen II had been seized with doubts as to his ally's sincerity, and summoned his daughter to Bulgaria under the pretext that her family were pining for her; he broke off the alliance with Vataztes. In the following year, he not only made peace with the Latins, but formed an alliance with them against the Nicaean Emperor. It is difficult to explain this complete *volte face* on the part of the Bulgarian Tsar. Many consider that it was due to strong pressure from the Pope, who continually threatened to anathematize him and, even more terrible, to send a crusade

to his lands under the pretext that there were many heretics there who were sheltered by the government. The Bulgarians had not forgotten the ravages left by the crusaders, and it is quite possible that his desire to protect his people from another such invasion forced Ivan Assen to change his policy. Historical sources inform us, however, that while he was acting in alliance with the Latins in Eastern Thrace, the Tsar received terrible news of an epidemic in Turnovo that had taken the lives of many of the inhabitants. The Tsaritsa, one of his children and the Patriarch had all died. He accepted their deaths as God's punishment for his betrayal of Vatatzes, left the field of battle immediately, broke with the Latins and renewed his alliance with the Nicaeans. Elena returned to Lascaris — this time for good. Contemporary historians consider that this return to his old ally was the result of his realization that the role of Catholicism and its Balkan offspring, the Latin Empire in South-East Europe was negative and destructive. Ivan Assen, who had entered into alliance with the Orthodox rulers, pursued this policy to the end of his life. Threats from Rome had no effect. Bulgaria enjoyed many years of peace, and only in the last year of Ivan Assen's reign did troops again set out from Turnovo. This time they marched northwards to protect their country from the Tartars who were pouring in from the steppes of Russia, and to prove to Europe that the terrible Asian hordes could be contained. It was in the same year that Ivan Assen II, whom history considers to be the greatest of the Bulgarian Tsars, passed away.

The reign of Ivan Assen II was an era of greatness, calm and prosperity for the Bulgarian people. He proved to his people that there were kind-hearted rulers, and that good and evil in the fate of a people were the result of the skill or incapability of the Tsar. Ivan Assen possessed the wonderful gift of ruling and acting in a way that was in line with the requirements of his time, of combining the interests of his own class with that of the state and the people, of being versatile in his actions but unbending in the pursuit of his aim.

TSVETANA GEORGIEVA

IVAYLO

"... I, God's servant Constantine Chetets who am called Voyssil the Grammarian, wrote this book for the Presbyter Georgi, known as Radoslav the Presbyter in the town of Svurlig in the time of Tsar Ivaylo and the Episcopo of Nishava Nicodemus, in the year 6787 (1278-79), in the 7th indiction when the Greeks besieged the city of Turnovo...."

From notes in the *Svurlig* Gospel

The history of the Mediaeval Bulgarian state was an eventful one. History has preserved for us the names of wise statesmen, brave military leaders and talented creators of Bulgarian culture. Manuscripts and legends bear scant information about those who led the people in their fight against foreign and local aggressors. One of the names which stands out most is that of Ivaylo — the leader of the great anti-feudal uprising of 1277-1280.

The Byzantine chronicler, Georges Pachimeres, begins his tale of the uprising just as he would begin a folk tale. "There was there (in Bulgaria) a peasant who grazed swine for money, and his name was Burdokva. (This was the contemptuous name given to Ivaylo by his opponents — it means "salad"). He took great care of his pigs, but none of himself, paying attention neither to his dress nor to his food. Since he ate only vegetables he lived poorly and modestly...."

The man who took no care of himself was the only one to care for the plight and fate of his people in one of the darkest periods of its history. During the second half of the 13th century, the lot of the Bulgarian peasant became almost unbearable. Most of them had lost their freedom and become mere serfs. They worked from dawn till dusk, but the fruits of their labour went to the feudal rulers. The number of taxes was immense. The peasants paid a tithe on grain, wine, meat, and everything else of any importance. Bulgaria was a rich and fertile land but practically nothing remained for those who laboured in her fields. It was at this time that the feudal overlords demanded something else apart from grain, sheep and wine. They also wanted money. In order to pay the new taxes, the peasants had to sell the little that was left to them at very low prices, which reduced them to the most terrible poverty.

A new burden was added to that which the people already carried — numerous enemy invasions. In a matter of only eight years — from 1259 to 1267 — there were three Magyar invasions. They left a trail of destruction in the North-Western areas. In 1263, the Byzantines captured many towns on the Black Sea coast and in Thrace. Then a new trouble was added to all this. The Tartars invaded from the North, and war and plunder was their profession. They left only smouldering ruins behind them, and their name was a synonym for death.

The Tsar and the boyars, who should have had the fate of their people firmly in their hands, did nothing. Blinded with greed, they only aimed to accumulate even greater riches, they were involved in numerous intrigues and quarrels, and fierce struggles for power and land.

There was only one possible way out of all this for the suffering people — open war against both foreign and local oppressors. The organizer and leader of this struggle was the swineherd Ivaylo.

This alert peasant, who had himself experienced the lot of the masses, was able to see the root of this evil. He began to tell his friends that fighting was the only

answer, the only way to take the power out of the hands of a negligent and incapable aristocracy. No one believed him at first. Who had ever heard of a peasant fighting his master? The brave words of this Bulgarian, however, gradually won over many of his friends, and before long, his name was known all over the country. Oppressed peasants, inspired by the idea of overthrowing their masters, flocked to Ivaylo.

The uprising broke out with irrepressible force in the spring of 1277. A detailed study of the historical sources available shows that the centre of this popular rebellion was the Dobroudja and Loudogoriyé, where Ivaylo himself lived. This wave of anger encompassed the whole of North-East Bulgaria. The ragged and unarmed mass of peasants, goaded by the anger and hatred that had accumulated over the course of centuries, captured boyars' castles, fortresses and towns. Every new campaign undertaken by Ivaylo increased his strength. His army was transformed from a motley crowd into a well-organized fighting unit which did not know defeat. The feudal rulers were quite helpless in the face of this wave of popular vengeance. Only some of the larger cities and fortresses remained in the hands of the Tsar; it was from these that the frightened ruling class watched the turn of events without being able to do anything about it. The ignorant swineherd turned out to be an excellent military leader.

When he had dealt with the local oppressors, Ivaylo led his army against the other great evil — the Tartars. He attacked one Tartar horde and defeated it. The defeat of the second horde soon followed. The invaders, who until then had been quite invincible, hastened to withdraw to the other side of the Danube. The victory over the Tartars was a miracle. This staggering piece of news brought another thousand men to join Ivaylo's army.

In the autumn of 1277, Ivaylo led his huge army towards the capital of Turnovo. Frightened and helpless, the Bulgarian Tsar Konstantin Tih led his small army against the rebels. The peasants annihilated the Tsar's army and the ruler himself was killed by the pea-

sant leader. The rebel's victorious march led to the walls of the city and Ivaylo's army surrounded Turnovo. Panic set in among the ruling class. The horrified boyars awaited their end, because Ivaylo was a man of the people and had come with the people in order to avenge centuries of oppression.

The peasant uprising in Bulgaria threw the Byzantine feudal aristocracy into a state of great alarm. It had not forgotten the great popular uprising in Asia Minor and, confronted by this new wave of popular vengeance, decided to intervene actively in the affairs of its northern neighbour. A certain Ivan — a sorry remainder of the glorious family of Assen — was brought to Constantinople from the provinces. He was married to the daughter of the Emperor Michael VIII, and was crowned Tsar of Bulgaria under the name of Ivan Assen III. Michael ordered the widow of Constantine Tih, a close relative of his, to retire to a monastery and thus to vacate the throne for the new Tsar. Tsaritsa Maria, who was being threatened from two quarters, did not lose her self-possession and began to make compromises. In order to preserve her power, or perhaps to secure the throne for her son, who was still a minor, or perhaps for both these reasons, this proud descendant of the Palaeologuses offered herself and the Bulgarian throne to the illiterate but brave peasant — the talented warrior Ivaylo. His army was at the gates of Turnovo, and no one knew how long the city would be able to hold out against the siege.

The peasant leader rejected the proposal of the Tsar's widow, declaring that he did not desire power that he had not won with his sword and his army. The rebel army, however, after a year of constant battles, was fatigued, and the Byzantines were advancing on Bulgaria. It was then that Ivaylo showed that he was not only a great warrior but also a far-sighted statesman. In the spring of 1288, the gates of Turnovo were opened to the rebel army, Ivaylo married Maria and ascended the throne of the Assenids.

For the first time, a man who was not only a commoner, but who had been given his power by the people,

came to the throne in a mediaeval state. It seemed as if the Bulgarians who were alive in the second half of the 13th century were predestined to be witnesses and participants in events that were nothing short of miracles. Ivaylo, however, had no time to develop his home policy and to afford practical relief to those whom he had led in the struggle for justice. It was not the caresses of the artful Byzantine Tsaritsa that prevented him from lightening the burden of his brothers. Ivaylo soon demonstrated that his marriage was only a manoeuvre of statesmanship and that neither the throne nor the Tsaritsa would blind him to his duty and deflect him from his chosen road. It was the large number of enemies both at home and abroad, however, that threatened the achievements of the rebel peasants.

The Tartars, who were alarmed by the unexpected defeat and did not really believe in the strength of a peasant army, again crossed the Danube in order to prove both to the world and to themselves that the people who had swept well-equipped and organized armies from their path could not be defeated by simple peasants. The Tartar invasion from the North was accompanied by another terrible danger, this time coming from the South. The Byzantine Emperor sent a huge army to Bulgaria headed by the famous warrior Michael Glava. This army had to stamp out the fires of discontent, to destroy the peasant Tsar and his supporters and to set on the throne the man whom the Byzantines regarded as Tsar Ivan Assen III. Michael VIII Palaeologus was extremely intelligent and was well aware of the fact that rivalry between the Byzantine and the Bulgarian aristocracy must take second place when the interests of the feudal system as a whole were being threatened. The example set by the Bulgarian peasants alone constituted a danger for the Byzantine feudal aristocracy, a greater danger than any foreign enemy.

In Turnovo, the Bulgarian boyars began to recover from the shock. Ivaylo was now exposed to danger from two quarters. The danger from outside was welcomed by the aristocracy. The boyars soon got their bearings

and began plotting to dethrone the peasant Tsar and to take back that which had always been theirs, wealth and power. Ivaylo who had no time to enjoy his success was forced to fight — this time on three fronts.

The young Bulgarian Tsar, the former swineherd, was not frightened by this complex and seemingly hopeless situation. Having decided to finish what he had begun, he again gathered his vast people's army and sent it to fight the enemy. Ivaylo had never studied the subtleties of war and government, but his own abilities, his wide experience in battle and his love for his people helped him to take the right path. The former rebel army first marched against the Tartars, because Ivaylo was already acquainted with their manner of fighting and knew that a victory would raise the morale of his troops. The course of events showed how right these actions were. The Tartar regiments, led by the experienced warrior Kasim Bey, to whom the Byzantines had granted the high title of *protostrator*, were again to feel the might of the Bulgarian peasant army. They were again forced to retreat to the lands north of the Danube.

Inspired by the victory over the Tartars, the Bulgarian army marched southwards, this time against the Byzantines. The latter, who had taken advantage of the fact that Ivaylo had been engaged in the North, had succeeded in overcoming the heroic resistance of many fortresses and had penetrated deeply into Bulgarian territory. A panegyric dedicated to their leader, Michael Glava, even claims that they captured Varna. The Emperor had reason to be pleased. Ivaylo, however, joined forces with the defenders of the fortresses and began to inflict defeats on the hitherto invincible Byzantine army. A series of fierce battles followed, and this was concluded with one decisive battle in which the huge Byzantine army was almost annihilated.

Greatly alarmed at this defeat Michael VIII resorted to the well tried means of diplomacy. Byzantine messengers set off northwards towards the Tartars to try to persuade them, in return for gold and other treasures, to invade Bulgaria a second time. The Tartars, who

were greatly angered by the defeats they had suffered, something which was quite foreign to them, and goaded on by Constantinople, again invaded Bulgaria. Ivaylo was forced to lead his army northwards once more. When he left Turnovo in order to defend his country from these foreign invaders, the third hostile force — the boyars — intervened. In order to destroy the faith of the population, they started rumours that Ivaylo had been killed in battle and that his army had broken up. The gates of Turnovo were again opened to admit Ivan Assen III, who was accompanied by a large Byzantine army. The boyars accepted the Byzantine puppet as Tsar of Bulgaria.

While this act of treachery had been taking place in Turnovo, Ivaylo had inflicted a total defeat on the Tartars in the Danubian Plain, and once again compelled them to withdraw to the north. This victory, however, did not bring his troops the rest they deserved. They had scarcely finished the battle with the Tartars when they were confronted by a new enemy — the Byzantine army — which had been set the task of crushing the popular rebellion and consolidating the power of Ivan Assen III. The exhausted rebel troops were unable to cope with the Byzantine attack, and Ivaylo sought refuge behind the walls of the strong Drustur fortress (now Silistra). In spite of a long siege, the Byzantines were unable to break through the defence. Before long, Ivaylo marshalled troops and again attacked. His people loved him so much that thousands of volunteers flocked to join his army. Once again the heroism and inspiration of the rebellion brought liberation to North-East Bulgaria.

Ivaylo again led his people towards Turnovo to take back the throne that had been won with the might of peasant anger. The Byzantine Emperor was greatly alarmed and sent an army ten thousand strong towards the passes of the Balkan Range to cut off Ivaylo's rebels. This army was, however, totally defeated deep in the mountains. Another huge army was sent from the Byzantine capital, but it suffered the same fate. Ivan Assen III became aware of the fact that his great patron

would not be able to keep him on the throne, and one dark summer night he left Turnovo, never to return, taking with him part of the royal treasures.

Utterly exhausted, but full of enthusiasm at the many victories, the rebel army set out for Turnovo, where they were awaited by joyful crowds. The boyars, who were disenchanted by the failures of their foreign allies, realized that the might of the people must be contained, and that this could only be achieved if the aristocracy could leave its petty disputes on one side. The boyars, who knew where the people's Tsar would direct his energies in a state that was not threatened by foreign enemies, joined forces. While Ivaylo's army was advancing on Turnovo, the aristocracy placed one of their own candidates on the throne, Georgi Terter.

This was a quite unexpected blow. Ivaylo's troops — ordinary villagers who had been away from their homes for three years, no longer had the strength to withstand it. The spectre of hopelessness slowly penetrated their exhausted ranks. The peasant leader was aware that the boyars had chosen just the right moment at which to unite. His troops dispersed.

Ivaylo, however, had no intention of leaving the task he had commenced unfinished, the task for which his whole people had made so many sacrifices. He feverishly sought for a solution, and the self-taught but talented diplomat in him spoke up again. He gathered his most loyal friends and went to the camp of the Tartar Khan Nogai, where he extended his hand in friendship to his former enemy, Kasim Bey. Ivaylo knew that his exhausted peasant army would be unable to cope with the united forces of the boyars. He needed a foreign ally, and the Tartars, who had not yet reached the feudal stage of development, were the only people who could be regarded as friends of the rebel peasants. The Byzantines, however, were not idle. The intrigues of the illegitimate daughter of the Emperor, Euphrosyne, who had been sent to Nogai's harem long ago, aroused the anger of the barbarian leader. At a banquet, Nogai gave the order for Ivaylo to be beheaded. His death was the end of the great peasant revolt in Bulgaria, and the

feudal aristocracy in South-East Europe could stop worrying.

However, the results of Ivaylo's life-work remained: the rebellion which was like a fire which enveloped the entire peasant masses, shook the Bulgarian feudal system to its foundations. The memory of Ivaylo, which came to his people's minds whenever the oppression of feudalism became too terrible to bear, remained.

TSVETANA GEORGIEVA

PATRIARCH EUTHYMIUS

“... And thus the later feats and victories of this man over the devil were much greater than the first, when he was living his life in peace....”

From *Eulogy of Patriarch Euthymius* by Gregoriy Tsamblak

The last of the patriarchs of Mediaeval Bulgaria, Euthymius, who was fated to have no successor for the next 550 years, was born in an era for which the word “troubled” is an understatement. Bulgaria and the neighbouring states were being torn by a crisis which was typical of the late feudal period. It affected the life of the state, the church, morals, ethics and everything that science refers to as “elements of the superstructure”. Separatism was nearing its zenith, which was soon to turn the political map of South-East Europe into a mosaic of tiny and helpless states that were continually locked in battle.

Feudal exploitation had reached an unheard of scale, there were no limits to it and the peasant masses, who had been reduced to hopeless poverty, were trying to find a way out of their miserable lot. Bogomilism was once again widespread. Many new versions of orthodox christianity appeared, some of which possessed the rationalistic elements of the approaching Renaissance, while others preached the basic equality of all people in the eyes of God. In this turbulent era, whose

many conflicts gave rise to an extremely intense spiritual life, the feudal ruling class was unable to find satisfaction and support in religion. It was for this reason that the church itself created a heresy which was legitimized as official orthodoxy. This was Hesychasm, which preached the complete divorce of the personality from society, complete meditation and self-absorption which was thought to be the only way in which to achieve complete unity with God.

Euthymius, whose family were members of the feudal aristocracy — many seek its roots in the famous boyar family of the Tzambulaks — became fully absorbed in Hesychasm after his renunciation of the troubles and joys of secular life. While a monk in the Kilifarevo Monastery, near Turnovo, at an extremely early age he became a close friend of one of the most prominent Hesychasts — Theodosius of Turnovo — and put all his efforts into achieving the state of perfection that he preached. He left for Byzantium with his teacher and guardian and there, at its spiritual centres, Constantinople and Mount Athos, became acquainted with the subtleties of asceticism and mysticism. Euthymius's mind, however, was extremely alert, his spirit was an inquiring one, and this prevented him from becoming utterly absorbed in meditation. He had an excellent education for his time, and also searched for spiritual food in aims which were much higher than his own salvation. The heresies were the most obvious blot on the society in which he lived, for whose fate he cared very deeply, and he sought the reasons for their appearance. Euthymius was, however, the product of his time and of his class and did not search for them where they could be found. He became convinced that the heresies that had flooded the whole of South-East Europe came from the holy scriptures themselves which had been translated long ago and were full of mistakes made by the numerous scribes who had recopied them. These mistakes, which distorted the Christian dogma, made possible many false interpretations and, according to Euthymius, were the cause of the heretic abuse of religion. He considered that new translations should

be made which would destroy the heresies and exclude such mistakes in the future. He also devised a spelling reform which would resurrect the then dead language of Cyril's and Methodius's literature.

Euthymius, who was undeservedly imprisoned on the island of Lemnos after the death of Tsar Ivan Alexander, left Byzantium and returned to his own country. His erudition, modesty and wisdom were already famous and the young Bulgarian Tsar Ivan Shishman built him a new monastery and constantly sought his advice. The last of the Bulgarian Tsars had good reason for this, because he already had dim forebodings of the fall of Bulgaria. Ivan Stratsimir, who was the unlawfully deprived heir to the throne, broke away from Shishman's state with the North-Western regions of Bulgaria, of which Vidin was the centre. In North-East Bulgaria there was an independent state ruled by the nobleman Dobrotitsa, who was followed by his son Ivanko. Relationships between the three states were strained and could almost be described as hostile, and the hatred that existed between the sons of Ivan Alexander soon crystallized into an open war for the Sofia area. Heresy took on alarming dimensions. The boyars caused their ruler a great deal of trouble with their petty quarrels and unconcealed separatists plans. All this, however, seemed to Ivan Shishman a minor matter in comparison with the terrible danger of foreign invasion. As early as the beginning of the century, a barbarian wave had borne down on the Balkan Peninsula — the hordes of the Ottoman Turks. In the 1370s, when Ivan Shishman ascended the throne in Turnovo, the Ottomans, who had been the allies of his father, had not only plundered and laid waste Eastern Thrace, but had also firmly established their power in the lands which bordered on his state. Bulgaria's turn was soon to come. The Ottomans invaded her territories and enslaved many parts of the Southern areas. The peace treaty that had been concluded was in fact just a brief respite before fresh battles.

Euthymius, true to his upbringing and his world outlook, tried to unite a society which was threatened

with extinction, reviving the purity of the Christian religion in his sermons and praising the martyrdom of saints who had lived long ago. He was soon forced to cease his literary activities, however, because he was elected head of the Bulgarian church after the death of Patriarch Ioanikiy. As spiritual guardian of Bulgaria, which was already threatened by destruction, together with Tsar Ivan Shishman, Euthymius was to live through the most terrible experience that can be suffered by a national leader and to be remembered in history as a majestic and tragic figure. He became not only adviser, but also the mainstay of the last Bulgarian Tsar, who was desperately searching for a way out of a hopeless situation; first he begged the Ottoman ruler for peace, giving him his own sister for a wife as a token of loyalty, then he sought a secret alliance with the neighbouring Christian rulers, hoping to present a united front to the invaders. We must mention the fact that Shishman's versatile policy, although in the end it was of no avail, is worthy of respect. It postponed, for almost a quarter of a century, the fall of Bulgaria and to a certain extent, contained the first Ottoman thrust. This was of great significance for European civilization. Euthymius played a very prominent part in this policy. He did not only give the tsar moral support, but advised him to take the steps that were the most suitable for those intolerably hard times.

Euthymius did not forget his duties as a spiritual leader, and tried with both sermons and written appeals to weld his people together. When long columns of refugees sought refuge behind the stout walls of the Turnovo fortress, Euthymius had become the generally recognized spiritual leader of his people. In spite of all this, he was still able to find time and energy for literary activities. He wrote lives and eulogies of the best known Bulgarian saints, and other figures from his nation's heroic past. His erudition in questions of religion and ethics brought him recognition in other countries far beyond the boundaries of Bulgaria and he was even able to answer questions put to him by foreign monks. He did not forget about his plans for a reform in spell-

ing and language and entrusted the translation and editing of the prayer-books and gospels to the most erudite of the priests, personally supervising their work.

In 1393, while Tsar Ivan Shishman was doing his utmost to defend Bulgaria's independence in the North-Eastern regions with the last of his forces, the Ottomans besieged Turnovo. According to the legend, the city fell not because its defenders were exhausted or because of the great military skill of the conquerors. In the shadowy border between the legend and reality of the last days of Turnovo lurks the dark figure of an unknown traitor.

There is a word in Turkish, *Yagma*, which has no exact equivalent in the European languages. It means that troops had the right to commit atrocities, to steal and kill in the township they had conquered, rights which were unlimited. When the Ottomans entered Turnovo, their leader uttered the word "*yagma*". A ghastly massacre followed. In these terrible moments, when thousands of people were dying, and centuries-old Turnovo was being reduced to ruins, Patriarch Euthymius, loyal to his duty, remained with his people. The thought of his own safety did not enter his head. While his beloved churches were being desecrated by the brutal hordes, he sought their leader to beg for mercy for his fellow-citizens and gave his tormented flock the only thing he still had — courage and consolation. The days of the "*yagma*", however, were not the worst thing that the inhabitants of Turnovo and their leader were to experience. Turnovo was soon to become the scene of a tragedy which was to be repeated many times in the course of the Ottoman invasion. The conquerors gathered a hundred and twenty of Turnovo's leading citizens and slaughtered them all beneath the arches of the Church of St Peter and St Paul. Their bones are a unique monument to the dauntless spirit of the Bulgarians. This glorious death, however, was not to be granted to Patriarch Euthymius. He had to face this terrible blow and then to gather his strength for the next. The Ottomans then undertook a mass deportation of the survivors. Up to the very last moment, Eu-

thymius, who was banished, offered consolation to those who were left behind in the ruined town, and to their kith and kin who were leaving their homes and families for ever. A tale in the *Eulogy of Patriarch Euthymius* by Gregory Tsamblak tells us of the heartbreaking farewell that took place between the people of Turnovo and their last Patriarch.

The Ottomans banished Euthymius far from the Bulgarian capital. Many consider that he found a last refuge in the Bachkovo Monastery in the Rhodope Mountains. The Patriarch, who was exhausted by his sufferings, did not survive Bulgaria by many years. No one recorded the years of his death in those terrible times. His sorrowful life left its mark in history, however. Throughout the dark years of Ottoman oppression, the majestic image of their last leader lived on in the minds of Bulgarians and his disciples carried to Rumania, Serbia and distant Russia the treasures of mediæval Bulgarian literature, a large part of which were the works of Patriarch Euthymius.

TSVETANA GEORGIEVA

PETER PARCHEVICH

In the Balkans, the seventeenth century was filled with tension. Groups of rebels roamed over the Peninsula and turned the mountains into rebel hideouts, making bold sorties against the Ottoman conquerors. "The whole world is full of various robber bands," complained the Ottoman government in its official documents.

"Laws have been forgotten," Hüsseyin Hezarfan, the 17th century Ottoman writer, warned his readers. "The *rayah** is being diverted to the advantage of the spahis."

This rebellious spirit seized the whole of Bulgaria. The defeats suffered by the Ottoman Empire and the ever more frequent clashes with her European enemies — Austria, Poland and Venice — raised the spirit of the oppressed, fired their imaginations with brave dreams and plans for liberation. It was in these turbulent decades that Peter Parchevich reached maturity. He was born of keen and intelligent parents in the mountain village of Chiprovets in 1612. The economic growth of this town and the special privileges it enjoyed nurtured great freedom of thought here. Neither Ottoman colonization nor conversions to Islam affected this proud centre of Bulgarian nationalism. The atmosphere of this town, which was imbued with national pride and a yearning for freedom, left its mark on the childhood of Peter Parchevich.

* Rayah (T) — a non-Mohammedan subject of Turkey

In this part of North-West Bulgaria, where Catholicism had penetrated at a very early stage, there were many prominent Bulgarian Catholics. Among them, the figure of a notable man of Chiprovets, Peter Bogdan, Catholic Archbishop of Sofia, stands out. This energetic and gifted man who had accumulated a vast amount of knowledge and won the respect of everyone while still very young, was immensely proud of his Bulgarian nationality and was filled with a burning desire to devote his efforts to raising the cultural level of his suffering people and to their political liberation. In a large number of works which were both well written and filled with the fire of his convictions, he strove to explain the significance of his enslaved country and the necessity of its liberation. "Bulgaria," he emphasized, "is the name now given to the territory of the same name which once included Upper Moesia, the whole of Thrace, most of Macedonia and the whole of Moravia as far as Ohrid and the border of Albania, Greece and Serbia, and which in the East spreads as far as the Black Sea, and in the North is divided by the Danube from Wallachia and Moldavia."

The desire of these keen and intelligent Bulgarians, among whom Peter Parchevich grew up, to state the historical right of their country to a free existence, was evident in the great interest some of them took in the local cultural heritage and the treasures created by the Bulgarian people in the past. More than a century before Païssiy, Peter Bogdan was turning the pages of ancient books, in order to discover something of his nation's past. In one of his historical works about the history of Ohrid, he emphasized: "The town, just as it is now, was in the Kingdom of Bulgaria and was its chief town. Today all the inhabitants of the town are Bulgarians and they govern and serve in this town, as a right ceded to them by the Turks when they conquered it." (This evidently refers to the Archbishopric of Ohrid.) Peter Bogdan refers to Mauro Orbini and adds that he not only stated that Ohrid was in Bulgaria, but that it was the seat of the Bulgarian tsars and that they always lived there.

It was in such a wide awake social and spiritual climate that Peter Parchevich grew up. This was the reason why, at a later date, these patriots referred to him as "our son", "since the person referred to is from Bulgaria", when they recommended him as Archbishop of Marcianopolis in 1654. While still very young, he studied at the famous Illyrian College at Loretto, Italy. He spent seven years there, increasing his wisdom and knowledge. He continued his education in Rome and was granted the title of Doctor of Canon Law and Divinity. In 1644, the young catholic priest returned to his homeland, summoned by Peter Bogdan. From this time onwards he became his associate in the struggle for the political liberation of Bulgaria. Before long, however, his vocation took him to Moldavia as secretary to the then Catholic Archbishop of Marcianopolis. This was the beginning of his difficult path as a missionary of freedom.

Having become aware of the decline of the oppressive Ottoman system, this patriotic Bulgarian was filled with a burning desire to bring about its final destruction.

He felt the aspirations not only of his own people, but also of the other oppressed Balkan peoples, and was well aware that these aspirations could come true if a united effort was made. His acute powers of political observation convinced him that the support of the European powers that were hostile to Turkey must be won if the Balkan liberation movements were to be successful. This foresight and great incentive, together with his immense love for Bulgaria, were the forces that guided this great Bulgarian in all his initiatives and political actions.

Parchevich, who was the ambassador of all liberty-loving Bulgarians and of the Rumanian and Moldavian rulers during the Cretan war of 1645-69, a war that was critical for Turkey, indefatigably journeyed from Poland and Vienna to Rome and Venice. This war, in which the Turkish Empire suffered a serious defeat, aroused new hopes and expectations. A wave of rebel actions swept the oppressed Balkan countries which

were filled with the fire of rebellion. Parchevich, who possessed great discernment, grasped and expressed this inner ferment against the Ottoman feudal regime in his address to the Venetian Senate in 1650. Inspired by the increasingly militant spirit of his people, he told the senators of this powerful Adriatic republic that his people were well aware "that the Sultan's might was on the wane", and that "his strength had been exhausted by the glorious Venetian Republic because of the unending war". For this reason they had "gathered courage to step forward and rebel against this great beast", i.e. the Empire. These auspicious circumstances for the spread of liberation movements in the Balkan countries were made use of by Parchevich and he headed a great political plot. It was planned that Bulgarians and Rumanians should act together. As early as 1647, Parchevich appeared at the court of the King of Poland, sent in secret by those who were preparing for a war of liberation, and begged for arms and aid in this struggle. The Polish ruler Wladislaw IV sent Parchevich away with generous and encouraging offers of help. This diplomatic meeting was accompanied by wonderful gifts. Wladislaw IV sent a portrait of himself in battle dress, a huge red velvet banner, a ring and ecclesiastical vestments. These gifts were to have been a pledge of the Slav ruler's wish to aid the suffering Balkan peoples in their efforts for liberation. Parchevich, who had given the Rumanian prince encouraging news, hastened to bring cheer to the Bulgarians, who were ready for battle. "They proved to us", says Parchevich regarding the mood of his fellow-countrymen, "how easily the East may be liberated." The Ottoman Empire was undergoing a critical phase, the Turks were discouraged, they had lost their former "audacity and haughtiness", they were aware that "the end of their kingdom" was nigh.

The unexpected death of Wladislaw IV dismayed the liberation movement. However, the flame of rebellion was not extinguished. In 1649 and 1650, the Balkan peoples renewed their diplomatic attempts to secure aid from Europe. Parchevich was again the ambassador of liberty, inspired by the militant dreams of

the Bulgarian and the other Balkan peoples. He toured Poland, Austria and Venice and continued to insist, to convince Turkey's European enemies that they should give aid and eloquently explained the political advantages that active intervention for the Balkan people would bring them. Parchevich told the Doge of Venice himself that "the time is most suitable (for this), and the conditions are most auspicious". "Let the glorious Venetian Republic not believe," said the untiring Bulgarian diplomat in his address to the Venetian Senate, "that the Sultan is as powerful as many people consider him to be. He desires peace more than a hare pursued by greyhounds when he sees the immense agitation in his own realm and the losses he has suffered both on dry land and on the sea over the last six years!"

These unsuccessful advances to the European rulers and to the Pope did not break Parchevich's spirit. He decided that it would be better to await a more suitable political moment to realize his plans, and made a temporary return to his duties as a Catholic missionary, this time as Archbishop of Marcianopolis with his seat in Moravia. His political activities were known to the Ottomans, and it would have been dangerous for Parchevich to remain in his own country. Although he was far from Bulgaria, he did not cease to strive for her freedom.

In 1656, he again headed a political plot in which it was planned that the other Balkan peoples should take part. Exhortations to rebellion were sent to the peoples of Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece and Albania.

Parchevich again appeared at the court in Vienna and offered the Austrian Emperor a well thought-out strategic plan: Austrian troops were to attack Ottoman forces in Hungary and Croatia and to distract the Sultan's attention from the Balkan uprising that had been prepared. Instead of a reply, the Austrian Emperor made an unusual request to Parchevich: in 1657, he instructed him to hold talks with the Ukrainian hetman Bogdan Hmelnitski in his home with the purpose of peacefully solving the differences and conflicts between Poland and the Ukraine. Parchevich's diplomatic gifts, intel-

ligence, knowledge and political foresight had indeed been acknowledged — the Austrian Emperor had conferred on him a noble title and the title of “Adviser to the Emperor”.

The brave Bulgarian was subjected to severe trials. His many years of political activity on behalf of his oppressed homeland, to which he had devoted his time and efforts, was regarded with disfavour by his superiors in the church.

The Catholic congregation in Rome preferred zealous missionaries of Catholicism and obedient servants of the Pope to independent and patriotic priests like Parchevich. For this reason they deprived him of his rank of archbishop in 1661 and sentenced him to seven years of poverty and privation.

When his rank had been restored to him, Parchevich did not cease to seek aid for his sacred purpose, in spite of the many disillusionings he had suffered from the cold indifference of the various European rulers towards the fate of the Balkan peoples.

He again set out for Poland, Vienna and Italy in order to express the aspirations of the peoples of the Balkan Peninsula who so hungered for freedom, most of all of the Bulgarians and Rumanians, and to beg for aid. A high Catholic dignitary prevented Parchevich from travelling to Italy. The tormented Parchevich was again threatened by the Congregation at Rome; he was faced with fresh humiliations, privations and sufferings. This selfless fighter for the liberation of his people, who was endowed with the unflinching quality of a true apostle ignored his own personal comfort and prosperity in the name of the good of his people. He sent a letter to the unfavourably-disposed papal agent, a letter filled with passionate pleas, bitterness and undaunted insistence. This letter is a moving autobiography and admission of the purpose and tasks of his many years of activity. “The constant invasions and oppressions on the part of the Tartars”, “the unceasing threat of the Turks” in his place of residence on the far side of the Danube, “the torments, fear, flight in winter, hunger and thirst, raggedness and cold” did not discourage this

unflinching and modest Bulgarian. He again undertook "the difficult journey that is filled with dangers and privations", "in the name of God, the faith and his country". "The Eastern (i. e. Balkan) peoples and the Princes of Rumania and Moldavia, because they no longer wish to be subjected to this slavery, when they see the ruin caused by the enemy, decided that it was better to lose their lives and to shed their blood than to tolerate and look on at evil."

Having ignored the orders of the papal agent, and although very sick, Parchevich again went to Rome and Venice trying to win European aid at a time when Poland and Turkey were at war, and the Poles had defeated the Ottoman armies at Hotin.

He emphasized the strong will of the Balkan peoples "to return their former Christian freedom, both for themselves and for the whole of the Christian world". He declared their readiness "rather to perish and shed their blood than to live in continual suffering".

The countless vain attempts to persuade church leaders, emperors and councils of state in Western countries to his point of view, however, together with so many unrealized hopes gradually embittered and disillusioned Parchevich. This brought about a change in his political views, and turned his eyes in the direction where the eyes of so many of the Balkan peoples were beginning to turn — to Russia. At the end of his "withering life" he expressed the hope that the most sincere aid was to be expected from Moscow.

Death put an end to the life of this fervent Bulgarian far from his native land — in Rome in 1674. Parchevich died in poverty and loneliness.

Almost three decades of selfless activity, inspired by an exalted aim, by unbounded love for Bulgaria and her people made Parchevich one of the greatest political figures in South-East Europe in the 17th century.

For this immortal Bulgarian from Chiprovets, freedom for the Bulgarians was inseparably connected with the fate of the remaining Balkan peoples. This was the reason why he acted as their representative in his diplomatic missions. Parchevich's name will always remain

among the names of those far-seeing figures who strove for the unity of the Balkan peoples, for their freedom and cultural development.

In his many-sided and strenuous activities Parchevich achieved higher political ideals. He emerged as a convinced champion of unity and peace among the whole of the Christian world threatened by the Moslems. The thought that in fighting for the liberation of the enslaved Balkan lands he was aiding "the whole Christian world" was the force that guided Parchevich in everything he did.

The work of Parchevich also aided the Slav cause. His faith in the liberating rule of Poland, his contribution to the improvement of relations between the latter and the Ukraine and finally the admiration he felt for Russia at the end of his life show Parchevich as an inspired forerunner of the drive for Slav unity, for raising the prestige of the Slav world.

Parchevich dedicated his entire diplomatic skill and tact to the exalted aim of liberation. With amazing perspicacity and unabating zeal he watched for the faintest glimmers of hope in the international situation that could be auspicious for the liberation movement in the Balkans. He would immediately seek political support for the oppressed peoples, in spite of the prohibitions of his ecclesiastical superiors, in spite of the many failures and refusals, undaunted by privation, illness and deadly danger.

The great ideas and work of Peter Parchevich left their mark on the political and social life of that era. They came to life in the uprisings at Turnovo (1686) and Chiprovets (1688) and the Karposhovo insurrection (1689). They were a brilliant behest for the generations that followed, a symbol of the purest patriotism and steadfastness in the struggle for national freedom.

B. TSVETKOVA

PAISSIY HILENDARSKI

From this day the Bulgarians
have a history and become a people!

Ivan Vazov

In the history of every people there are personalities who head great epochs, personalities with brilliant gifts of foresight who draw in the contours of the new world. At the beginning of Bulgaria's new period of history stands the titanic figure of Païssiy Hilendarski.

The eighteenth century in Bulgaria was turbulent and restless. The Ottoman Empire was disintegrating under the pressure of the new social relationships and was unable to withstand the competition of the modern European world. Emerging bourgeois forces, however, came up against the feudal splinter-states, were opposed by the yataghans* of the Kurdjali (robber) bands and fiscal persecution. It seemed as if there was no solution for the peoples imprisoned within the boundaries of this dying empire.

However, the ideas of the bourgeois epoch, the ideas of the Renaissance, of education and rationalism, although they made their appearance in Bulgaria at a later stage, gradually penetrated into the spiritual wilderness of the Ottoman Empire, heralding the Bulgarian National Revival. The first Bulgarian to perceive this, to comprehend the significance of the new world, was Païssiy Hilendarski.

* Yataghans — curved swords

Many towns and villages claim to be his birthplace. At present, however, more and more people accept the idea that Païssiy was born in Bansko in 1722. Having grown up in this bustling commercial town, which had been connected by its traders with the cultural centres of Europe for centuries, Païssiy was able to perceive the atmosphere of the new times at a very early age. The first seeds of patriotism were sown in him, and this sent him in search of new lands and new spiritual horizons.

The twenty- three-year-old Païssiy went to the Hilendar Monastery in 1745 with his brother, Laurentius, abbot of the monastery, and dedicated himself to the monk's calling. At that time, Mount Athos, with its monasteries imbued with the culture of many centuries, was the centre of the Balkan Christian world, and attracted many scholars, writers, painters, craftsmen and theologians. This was to be the place in which Païssiy was to develop into the nation's spiritual leader. It was here that he became acquainted with the ideas of the Renaissance, which were first absorbed by Greece and introduced into South-East Europe. It was here, in the vast libraries, that Païssiy learnt of his people's past, of the state that had been obliterated nearly four centuries ago, of its culture and literature.

Filled with patriotic feelings, the young man began to feel that his role was one of a national leader. His desire to awaken his people from centuries of lethargy, to set the hearts of simple ploughmen, labourers and craftsmen afire with national pride, became dominant in his strong and purposeful personality. With brilliant foresight, Païssiy chose the most suitable path. History was the miracle-working force which was to whisper to the slaves in Bulgaria's towns and villages, telling them about the past greatness of their people, and showing them what their path was to be in the future. In spite of illness, Païssiy set about this gigantic task. He trudged from library to library, from one monastery to the next, piecing together his people's past; he read old books and the notes in the margins, discovered charters granted by Tsars and their royal decrees. Hav-

ing studied the historical sources, Païssiy then set about studying the available literature, *Book of Historiography*, the work of Mauro Orbini, the Abbot of Dubrovnik, *Church and Civic Acts*, the work of the Italian cardinal Caesar Varonius, the history of the Serb, Ioan Raić and many other books. He did not content himself with this, however, but soon left foreign lands to search for fresh information about the Bulgarians.

These vast labours gave birth to an immortal work. In 1762, the rebel monk completed his *Slav-Bulgarian History — Concerning the Bulgarian People, Tsars and Saints*. "I ignored the headache that I had suffered from for so long, and my stomach had also been sick for a long time — I ignored this because of the great aim that I had. I managed to gather together buried and long-forgotten things into words and sentences", he wrote in the Epilogue of his History.

Like a true Renaissance character and thinker, Païssiy sought in the past for models to imitate and edify. It was not in Antiquity, however, that he sought, but in the Bulgarian Middle Ages which were filled with majesty and greatness. He began to tell of invincible Tsars, of the powerful realm of the Bulgarians, of the heroism of the people, of great military leaders, diplomats, scholars and spiritual leaders. After each tale or legend, Païssiy would turn to his contemporaries, saying: "Read this and know: you shall not be swept aside and reproached by people of other races and tongues".

Païssiy came to definite conclusions from his analysis of the past. He considered that the Bulgarians were an ancient and a glorious people who could not die out, who must awaken and revive their national and cultural traditions, their language and their nationality. The author of the *Slav-Bulgarian History*, attacks those who have forgotten their own nationality and language with angry reproaches. "O, you unreasonable man and misshapen creature, why are you ashamed to call yourself Bulgarian and why don't you read in your own language? Didn't the Bulgarians have a Tsardom and a state?"

In this way Païssiy formed a true idea of the tasks

of the coming era of national liberation. He pointed out that the awakening of national feelings and Bulgaria's future historical progress would have to be brought about by the drive for new Bulgarian education in the native language, the struggle for an independent Bulgarian church, the great battle for political liberation and a national constitution. The three-point programme thus mapped out turned the *Slav-Bulgarian History* from a literary and publicistic work into a manifesto for the Bulgarian National Revival.

When he had completed the *Slav-Bulgarian History*, the monk from Mount Athos set out as a national enlightener. He travelled from town to town, from village to village, he toured churches, monasteries, hamlets and townships in order to propagate his ideas, to win followers, to arouse the conscience of the nation. Legends still exist about the old monk who was pursued by Turkish guards and Greek priests, and greeted like a Messiah by the enslaved Bulgarians. The *Slav-Bulgarian History* was recopied many times. It was greatly revered. While many printed works of the 18th and 19th centuries have disappeared, or have survived only in single examples, over 60 copies of Païssiy's *History* are in existence today. Païssiy's first disciples set out among the people filled with its ideas and passionate exhortations. The most eminent of these are the priest from Kotel, Sophronius, Bishop of Vratsa, and the scholars Yoakim Kurchovski and Kiril Peychinovich. There was also a galaxy of teachers, merchants and craftsmen. Païssiy's *History* was printed for the first time in 1844 under the title *Book of Tsars*, which has been reprinted dozens of times down to our day.

The work and image of Païssiy occupy an extremely important place in the new Bulgarian historiography because they mark the beginning of our National Revival — a magnificent era in our national history. The tremendous interest taken in Païssiy's work gave rise to many arguments and discussions. His place of birth, the date and place where he died, and the nature of his ideology are still under discussion. Writers and painters, historians and publicists see his spiritual and physical

image in different ways. Some imagine him as a large, well-built man, a rebel and agitator, and others as a humble, sick old man, a monk and hermit. Some see him as a romantic, some as a sober politician, and others as a scholar and historian.

There is one fact, however, which is quite indisputable for those who have made a study of the work and time of Païssiy. He was a great thinker of the National Revival Period and was the first to set out the lines of his country's future historical development. In this way Païssiy became the father of the ideology of national liberation which, socially, is bourgeois-democratic ideology. Païssiy's outlook was inspired by the great ideals of the bourgeois revolution, by the brilliant quests of the Renaissance and Enlightenment. In expressing the needs of the emerging Bulgarian bourgeoisie, Païssiy at the same time expressed in his own ideological conceptions the needs of the people as a whole, the desire of the peasants, craftsmen and intelligentsia for political freedom, economic prosperity and spiritual and cultural emancipation.

N. GENCHEV

NEOPHYTE BOZVELI

"I am bound to admit that the path of study is a hard and sad one, that the holy temple of science is on a high peak, the path to which is steep and covered with thorns."

Neophyte Bozveli

Neophyte Bozveli is one of the most eminent men that Kotel, the birthplace of a large number of National Revival period figures, has given Bulgaria. He was born there in the middle of the Balkan mountains somewhere around 1785. While still a mere youth of 18 to 20, he left Kotel and set out for the famous monasteries on Mount Athos to seek happiness in study.

As the monk whose duty it was to travel and collect donations for the Hilendar Monastery, Neophyte travelled all over oppressed Bulgaria and around 1812, settled in Svishtov, where he lived for nearly two decades. There he devoted himself to educational work as a preacher, and unceasingly advocated the cause of education and science in the name of mankind and of the cultural advance of the Bulgarians. In Svishtov, together with another great Bulgarian educationalist, Emanuil Vaskidovich, Neophyte published an encyclopaedic textbook *Slav-Bulgarian Education of Children*, printed in Serbia in 1835. This book puts forward modern Bulgarian educational ideas concerning the role of upbringing as a powerful factor in the formation of the human personality. Neophyte shows the whole historic-

al absurdity of the old cell-type* of school, and calls for a secular education in the vernacular tongue. The book itself is written in a language comprehensible to children, and Church Slavonic elements have been reduced to a minimum.

Bozveli's educational ideas are of course a continuation and development of the ideas of the father of Bulgarian education, the great Bulgarian scholar, Dr. Peter Beron. Bozveli's aim, "to educate and raise the level of our people" was brilliantly achieved. He not only introduced the ideas of the National Revival into the spiritual wilderness of the Ottoman Empire, but integrated them nationally, and encouraged Bulgarians to follow the example of the educated European peoples.

In the second half of the 1830s, Neophyte set out over Bulgaria just like his great predecessor, Païssi, in order to advocate his ideas. It was just at this time that a desire to rebel against the Greek priests was ripening among Bulgarians. These priests, who had been seized by a nationalistic desire to restore the Byzantine Empire brutally trampled on the young seeds of Bulgarian national culture.

The national and church movement that had got under way opened up new opportunities for cultural and social work on the part of this passionate preacher. Neophyte, who was already a well known public figure, headed this movement in Turnovo. Having sown the seeds of rebellion in 1839, he left for Constantinople with the intention of directing the movement for the whole country from there. In the Turkish capital, Neophyte found a large Bulgarian colony of craftsmen and merchants, more than thirty thousand all told. He realized that this mass would be a natural basis for the centre of the struggle and began to organize the Bulgarians to serve his great aim. It was then that he put forward the idea of founding a Bulgarian church in Con-

* For a long time "cell" schools were the only kind of Bulgarian schools in existence. They were taught by monks (hence their name) or craftsmen, and children learnt reading and writing, prayers and a little arithmetic in them.

stantinople which would head the movement for the cultural revival and national autonomy of Bulgaria. On his initiative, a petition was sent to the Sublime Porte, and in the meantime, the Bulgarians adapted a small chapel where Neophyte conducted the first Bulgarian service to be held in the Turkish capital.

The Patriarchate soon realized that in the person of this "turbulent, corrupt priest" (this, by the way, is the origin of the name Bozveli), it would have a strong, experienced and recklessly bold opponent, and for this reason hastened to send him to the Turnovo metropolitan as a coadjutor. Although he took up the new post, Neophyte categorically refused to support Greek policy. For this he was denounced to the Turkish powers as a rebel and was exiled to the Hilendar Monastery on Mount Athos from 1841 to 1844.

During his exile, Neophyte devoted himself to literary activities and correspondence concerning Bulgarian affairs, in spite of very poor health.

In 1844, Neophyte escaped from the monastery and again went to Constantinople, where he headed the Bulgarian church movement. His close friend and associate Ilarion Makariopolski began to work with him. In 1845, they were both empowered by the Bulgarian guilds in Constantinople to represent the Bulgarian people before the Ottoman government, and continued their work even more energetically. In 1845, the two national leaders sent two petitions to the Sublime Porte in the name of the Bulgarian people. These proposed that a Bulgarian church service should be introduced which should be conducted by Bulgarian priests, that Bulgarian representatives should be admitted to the Constantinople Patriarchate, that a Bulgarian commission of four should be attached to the Sublime Porte and that the Bulgarians should be allowed to have their own church, schools and newspapers in Constantinople.

This, in fact, is the first Bulgarian national political programme, the first demand for the recognition of the Bulgarian nation. In order to realize their demands, Bozveli and Makariopolski sought the co-operation of

the French government and the Polish emigré organization of Adam Czartoryski.

The reaction of the patriarchate to the Bulgarian petition was a sharp one. Bozveli was denounced to the Russian Embassy in Constantinople as a western agent and, with the aid of the Russian Ambassador, the Patriarchate succeeded in obtaining an order exiling the two leaders of the national church movement.

In July 1845, Bozveli and Makariopolski were arrested by the Patriarchate's police and taken away to Mount Athos. Bozveli, who was in chains, was imprisoned in the turrets of the Greek Lavra Monastery. At a later date he was moved to the Hilendar Monastery. Although his health had been severely impaired, he again engaged in literary activities. It was then that he wrote his greatest work, *Mother Bulgaria*, which is a brilliant apology for education, a sharp criticism directed against the regime of dual oppression and a brave appeal for national autonomy, for a fight against Greek spiritual power.

Neophyte had barely completed his work when he was struck down by illness and died on June 4, 1848. For many years, the life, work and ideas of Bozveli deeply stirred the youth of the country over the years of the National Revival. His ideas of national autonomy, national education and an uncompromising fight against Greek and patriarchal power are an inseparable part of the ideology of the Bulgarian national liberation movement. The next leader of our national revolution, Bozveli's close associate, G. S. Rakovski, has the following to say about him: "He was the first to begin preaching all over Bulgaria and rousing the people to seek their historical rights."

N. GENCHEV

GEORGI RAKOVSKI

"I desire a sweet, rapid death for
the cause of freedom, and not long
years of slavery."

G. S. Rakovski

The short ode by our national poet Ivan Vazov has imprinted on the minds of Bulgarians the image of Rakovski as a vivid symbol of the irrepressible Bulgarian character, of the eternally questing spirit of the revolution. It seems that Vazov has said everything that needs saying about the many-faceted personality of Rakovski. Even the synthetic portrait created by the poet, however, does not reveal the scope of his titanic work to the full.

Rakovski led the group of National Revival period workers and thinkers who, during the second half of the 19th century, laid the foundations of our national culture, of revolutionary political thought, of Bulgarian literature and publicistics. This, however, is not the entire personality of Rakovski. For Bulgarians, he is first and foremost the forefather of the liberation struggles, the leader and ideologist of the national revolution.

Rakovski was born in 1821 in Kotel — one of the sacred places of the Bulgarian National Revival period. He grew up in a wealthy and cultured family, among people who were alive to the turn of events, nurtured with the rebel traditions of his family and with the legends and romance of his native town, which strengthened his spirit at a very early age. While still very young,

he set out in search of an answer to vital questions and to gather knowledge and experience.

Up to the time of the Crimean War, Rakovski's life was one of complex and turbulent development which was closely involved with the main events in Bulgaria's spiritual and political awakening. Both as a schoolboy in Karlovo and Constantinople, as leader of the Braïla uprisings in 1841-1842, as an emigré in Marseilles, a public figure in Kotel, a prisoner in Constantinople, as a wealthy merchant and champion of the Bulgarian church, Rakovski played a constant part in the development of the national struggles and accumulated a vast amount of experience in life and politics. This experience, combined with a passionate nature, was the factor that determined Rakovski's vital position. "However much I accumulated through these occupations (he meant trade)," he wrote at a later date, "it gave me no pleasure, because I was aware of all the sufferings of our poor people." From his early youth, this desire for his people's freedom had become "an incurable wound" in his ardent heart.

By the end of the Crimean War, Rakovski was already an experienced politician and thinker. His training, extensive international contacts, emphatically publicistic style and patriotic devotion were all qualities that made him into a leader of the national liberation movement. It was just at this time that the liberation struggles were entering their final phase. The period of the organized national revolutionary movement had arrived, a period when separate rebellions and spontaneous uprisings and the movement for cultural and political autonomy — both imbued with a strong feeling of national consciousness — fused and became a mighty torrent which was to sweep Ottoman bondage away.

Rakovski became an organizer, politician and ideologist of new trends in the national struggle. As early as the time of the Crimean War he was making attempts to settle Bulgaria's problems by means of Russian intercession. Then he formed a small band which roamed the Balkan Range and awaited a suitable moment for

an attack against the Ottomans. He described this attempt at band-formation in 1855 in the famous poem *Forest Traveller*, which was published immediately after the war in order to prove to Bulgarians that they "had lost their freedom by the sword, and by the sword they would win it again." From this time onwards, Rakovski devoted the whole of his political talent to proving the necessity of a nation-wide struggle against foreign domination and organizing the ranks of the future revolutionary army.

In 1858, Rakovski formed his first plan for the liberation of Bulgaria in Odessa. He formulated some of his basic conceptions with great foresight, and these remained the basis of the political thought of national liberation. He pointed out that Bulgarian liberation could only be achieved by means of a national uprising in which the entire nation must take part — the scholar with his works, the rich man with his money and all the sons of the nation with their lives. The national uprising must be organized and directed from one centre. It must be combined with the common struggle of the Balkan peoples and must adapt to the policy of the great powers in South-East Europe.

When he had reached these conclusions, Rakovski could find no peace. He travelled from town to town, from one country to another, wrote letters and proclamations, published newspapers, studied his nation's past and language, all with the purpose of proving the truth of his ideas, of organizing revolutionary forces and of seeking allies in his task. It was at this time that he began to form the idea of publishing a Bulgarian newspaper in Paris or Belgium in order to inform people in the West of events in Bulgaria. Instead of this, however, in 1860 Rakovski went to Belgrade and began to edit his famous newspaper, *Dounavski Lebed* (Danubian Swan) from there; this newspaper served as a tribune for the national revolution in the course of two years. Rakovski further developed his political ideology in *Dounavski Lebed*, forming a final thesis for the Balkan solidarity of the oppressed peoples, and making brilliant analyses of the policy of the great powers, he

demonstrated both its mercenary quality and its significance for the liberation struggles. He urged a rapid solution of the church question on a fair national basis, angrily protested against the banishment of Bulgarians to Russia, printed hundreds of despatches from all parts of Bulgaria — Moesia, the Dobroudja, Thrace and Macedonia, turning his newspaper into a true forum for the oppressed Bulgarians.

At the end of 1861, Rakovski was accepted as the leader of the revolutionary movement. The conflict between Serbia and the Ottoman Empire, which was coming to a head at that time, made it possible for him to form the first armed revolutionary band, the Bulgarian Legion in Belgrade. Apart from the formation of the legion, Rakovski again formulated his political arguments. In the *Belgrade Plan for the Liberation of Bulgaria* (1861) he showed the path that must be taken. An armed regiment of 1,000 brave men would enter Bulgaria raise a general rebellion and, when the Ottoman garrisons in the Balkan Range had been routed, would proclaim Bulgaria's liberation in Turnovo, the old capital of the Assenids. For the leadership of the revolution, Rakovski founded a centre known as the Bulgarian Directorate, which was entrusted with the role of a revolutionary government.

Just at the moment when Rakovski, like Garibaldi, pictured himself flying beneath the flowing banners of a victorious uprising, events took a turn for the worse. After the brave battle of the Bulgarian legionaries against the Ottoman garrison in Belgrade, Rakovski was deserted by the Serbian government which, by diplomatic means, had succeeded in settling its disputes with the Ottoman Empire. The legion was disbanded.

The failure of 1862 did not discourage Rakovski. He considered the Belgrade attempt to be a notable date as far as the Bulgarians were concerned, "the first step towards an independent political life," when they had demonstrated that they had not lost "their old warrior spirit," that they were "still a brave and intrepid nation." Rakovski did not stand by helplessly. He knew that fresh battles were to come, and stubbornly made pre-

parations for them. In 1863, he was in Athens and Cetinje where he gave passionate and eloquent proof that Asiatic barbarism could only be removed by the force of a general Christian union of all the Balkan peoples.

Two English missionaries in Athens, the Misses Mackenzie and Irby, bear witness to his ideas of Balkan unity of action: "Since our arrival, we have made the acquaintance of Mr Rakovski," wrote Miss Mackenzie. "We like him very much and I know no one among the Southern Slavs whose opinion we agree with so much, as he does not think as a Serb, or as a Montenegrin, but as a Slav."

Together with his efforts to found a Balkan alliance, new thoughts and ideas were ripening in Rakovski. The failures he encountered finally convinced him that the Bulgarian cause would only succeed if it relied on the strength of the nation, on its armed rebel army. At the end of 1863, Rakovski left for Rumania where there were more than 500,000 Bulgarian emigrés who had given ample proof of their patriotic spirit of self-sacrifice. Rakovski stayed among the *Hushové* (Bulgarian exiles in Rumania) right up to the end of his life, excluding the short journeys that he made, organizing them for the great day of liberation. While in Rumania, he renewed his advocacy of the idea of a united fight by the Balkan peoples against the Ottoman Empire. He was convinced that "the Danubian principalities would resolve their own disputes with the Sultan" and again became involved in a feverish burst of activity. He published two newspapers, *Budashtnost* (*Future*) and *Branitel* (*Defender*) and called for a united struggle.

What now came to the fore, however, was his political experience. He did not feel inclined to leave the cause of Bulgaria's liberation in the hands of foreigners who were frequently mercenary in their aims. "Our principle," he wrote, "has always been to respect all nations and to form alliances with them when they are just and sincere, that is, when they are aware of their mutual duty with us."

Guided by this conception, Rakovski refused to work with the Rumanian liberals in 1866 because he realized

that yet again foreign powers wished to make use of the Bulgarian national liberation movement without affording any real aid to the national cause. The idea of independent action predominated in him. At the beginning of 1867 he wrote his last programme *Provisional Law for the Forest Detachments for the year 1867*. The entire political wisdom of the revolutionary veteran is gathered in this work. Rakovski planned the formation of a single, disciplined army which would be politically controlled by the Supreme Bulgarian Civic Command, and under the military control of one Chief Voivoda. This army, and its political and military control, would be entirely independent of foreign forces and influence. The liberation movement was to become an independent force, capable of solving the problems of the national revolution on its own. This new act of foresight on the part of Rakovski remained as a behest for those who followed him along the steep and thorny paths of revolution.

The great services rendered by the forefather of the Bulgarian national revolution have been correctly evaluated by historiographers and regarded with gratitude by the generations that followed. A hundred years after his death, Rakovski is still one of the foremost figures of our national liberation movement, a brilliant political thinker, a great democrat, humanist and dreamer and a passionate and incorruptible patriot.

N. GENCHEV

VASSIL LEVSKI

"I have dedicated myself to my country, to serve it until my death and to work according to the will of the people."

Vassil Levski

Vassil Levski is the most attractive and most accomplished personality in Bulgarian history. For more than a century, his name and legendary feats have stirred the hearts of Bulgarians. His self-sacrifice and unparalleled patriotism can never be effaced from the memories of his compatriots.

Vassil Ivanov Kounchev, who was later given the name Levski (Lion) because of his exceptional dexterity and resourcefulness, was born in Karlovo in 1837 of a family of craftsmen who were members of the dyer's guild. He grew up filled with the revolutionary urges and the yearning for national education that was characteristic of this alert Balkan region. In 1861, the young deacon of the Sopot Monastery Vassiliy cast off his cassock and set off to join the liberation struggle. In the same year, he went to Belgrade and joined Rakovski's First Bulgarian Legion. After the legion had been disbanded, Levski returned to Bulgaria, worked as a teacher in the villages for a certain time and in 1867, again donned rebel clothing, this time as the standard-bearer of the Panayot Hitov band, which roamed the Balkan Range. In the following year, Levski was again a member of the Belgrade Legion.

The revolutionary experience he had acquired in the 1860s, and his great gift of foresight told him that Rakovski's ideas of freeing Bulgaria with armed bands organized from the neighbouring countries was already out-of-date, and that only a nation-wide organization in the country itself could raise the people in a victorious revolution. He confided this idea to the leader of the band, Panayot Hitov.

In 1868, Levski told Hitov that he had decided to begin an action in which "if I win, I shall win for the whole people, if I lose, then only I shall suffer."

This great inspiration was followed by rapid action. Between 1868 and 1869, Levski made two tours of the Bulgarian towns and villages in order to study the mood of the people and to sow the seeds of rebellion with funds provided by the Secret Committee in Bucharest. In the late autumn of 1869, he went to Bucharest in order to discuss his ideas and plans with prominent figures from among the revolutionary emigrés. There, together with Lyuben Karavelov and other revolutionary activists, Levski founded the Bulgarian Revolutionary Central Committee, which was to be the controlling centre of the coming organized struggle.

After the creation of the Bulgarian Revolutionary Central Committee, Levski finally returned to Bulgaria and set about his gigantic task. With the aid of thousands of loyal Bulgarians — peasants and craftsmen, teachers, merchants and priests, Levski laid the foundations of the Internal Revolutionary Organization, founded more than 500 town and village revolutionary committees and created a network of communications and connections. Lovech was chosen as the centre of this network, and the local committee was declared as the central organ of the liberation struggle.

Levski's faith and self-confidence increased together with the growth of the organization. He spoke out against the waverings of the emigrés from Bucharest and denied the right of the Bulgarian Revolutionary Central Committee to be the supreme organ of the liberation movement. By way of letters and couriers, he warned the former leaders of bands and organizations

that they must submit to the will of the people and place themselves at the disposal of the Internal Revolutionary Organization.

Apart from his organizational and conspiratorial activities, Levski also devised an ideological platform for the liberation movement. Levski, who was filled with the ideas of the Renaissance, of enlightenment and humanism, brought the ideas of the new world into the everyday lives of Bulgarians. In his letters, in the Charter of the Revolutionary Organization, in his dispatches and notes, one can discern how deeply the ideas of freedom and independence, and equality between all peoples are implanted. He brilliantly defends freedom of speech, of belief, of the press — all the human rights proclaimed by the bourgeois revolution.

This great realist and politician was also a dreamer. He saw the word of the future, which would, "raise a temple to the truth and the rights of freedom", in which "harmony, brotherhood and absolute equality between all peoples" would reign, where all people "would be equals in all respects." The doors of the more rational world of the future, according to Levski, could only be opened by the blows of the revolution — a revolution of conscience and soul. As did no other, Levski understood the significance of the fight against the Asiatic despotism of the Ottomans by means of independent action without being bound to foreign forces. It was because of this that he freed the revolutionary movement from foreign patronage and bound Bulgaria's historical fate only to the mind, muscles and will of the people. "We Bulgarians," wrote Levski to the newspaper *Svoboda* in 1870, "have been pitting all our strength to call upon humanity and freedom. There has been no reply to our hoarse voices. . . . Shall we continue to cry to them and have faith in their lies? No, instead of shedding tears, we shall cast bullets, our hope is in God and in our muscles."

The Internal Revolutionary Organization, which was founded on a solid organizational and ideological basis, and managed with considerable skill by its creator, Vassil Levski, became the most authoritative force in

the Bulgarian national liberation movement between 1870 and 1871. It gradually imposed its authority among the emigré populations in Rumania, Serbia, Russia and other countries. At the end of April and the beginning of May, 1872, on Vassil Levski's initiative, a unifying meeting of the Internal Revolutionary Central Committee and the Internal Revolutionary Organization was held in Bucharest. After a long debate, a compromise, but revolutionary platform was adopted. Lyuben Karellov was elected as chairman of the new Bulgarian Revolutionary Central Committee. Vassil Levski was empowered to represent the Bulgarian Revolutionary Central Committee everywhere and in all matters and in this way, preserved supreme control of the revolutionary movement and independence within the framework of the requirements of the new programme and the new charter for the Internal Revolutionary Organization.

After the Bucharest meeting, Levski was again in his element as an organizer. Together with a group of young associates, he returned to Bulgaria, founded many new revolutionary committees, created district leaderships, a secret postal service and a secret police for the Internal Revolutionary Organization. The revolutionary movement underwent an upsurge unheard-of until then. It armed itself, guns and gunpowder was purchased, rebel uniforms were made, and firing and tactical practice was organized for the future detachments of the revolution. The whole nation was on its feet. Levski was ubiquitous. He instructed, encouraged, wandered from town to town, from village to village, collecting money and arms.

In the autumn of 1872, Levski was betrayed and tried before a Turkish court as the chief rebel in the Empire. On February 19, 1873, this proud revolutionary was hanged on the gallows near Sofia. The organization he had created with such love and revolutionary skill was discovered and destroyed in a short space of time.

It was on the gallows that Levski, this inimitable Bulgarian, the symbol of purity and attractiveness,

achieved true immortality. "I have promised myself to my country and as a sacrifice for its liberation, I have not done this for my own advancement," he said. "What more could I want than to look at my country and see it free!" "We are people, too, and want to live like human beings, to be free with the full freedom of our land, where Bulgarians live in Bulgaria, Thrace and Macedonia. . . . We shall have one banner on which our pure and sacred republic will be written." When asked on one occasion by some peasants what he would do after the liberation of Bulgaria, he calmly told them that he would go and fight for the freedom of other peoples.

The winged thoughts of the Apostle of Freedom were not merely fine words or demagogic phrases. They contain the wisdom and charm of a life that had as its aim service to the ideals of freedom.

Bulgarians are extremely proud of Vassil Levski — the greatest son of his people. He does not only belong to Bulgaria, however, but to the whole of a Europe reborn in the 19th century. In the scope of his activities, which were directed against the remains of feudalism in Europe, in the strength of his spirit and his all-embracing revolutionary ideas, Levski emerges as the equal of the great figures of the French Revolution, of people such as Garibaldi and Mazzini, Lajos Kossuth and Nikolai Chernishevsky. Some of the foreign experts on Bulgarian history, who say that if Levski had lived in a bigger country and had written in a popular language, he would now be revered all over the world, are quite right.

N. GENCHEV

LYUBEN KARAVELOV

"We are in search of complete freedom — national freedom, personal freedom, human freedom. Whoever thinks as we do is our brother."

L. Karavelov

In 1834, a first son was born to Stoycho Karavelov, a wealthy man of Koprivshtitsa. The son was christened Lyuben. He spent his childhood in this town whose inhabitants had keen minds and loved freedom; it was at that time a symbol of the cultural and economic progress made by Bulgaria. It was amid the majestic scenery and in the quiet, happy life of this free mountain "republic" that the first sparks of free thought were struck.

Karavelov came up against the contradictions of the situation in Bulgaria at an early age. When, in 1850, he entered the Greek school in Plovdiv, he found himself in an entirely different environment. Plovdiv was a place of acute social and political conflicts. Karavelov felt oppressed by the spiritual atmosphere of the Greek school and could not bear the haughtiness of the Greek teachers. All this urged him to find a way of life in which he could give free expression to his proud spirit. He joined the ranks of the Bulgarian patriots who were fighting the Greek priests. Thus, while still very young, Karavelov stated his position as a patriot and fighter, and remained true to it until the end of his life.

On June 10, 1853, he left the Greek School. His father sent him to Adrianople to train as an *aba**-maker, but the son of this wealthy family had no talent for sewing sixteen hours a day. He considered this occupation to be more difficult than "raw campaigns through the Alps", and six months later, was sacked by the master-craftsman.

After his return to Koprivshtitsa, Karavelov set off with his father to collect livestock in Turkey and Serbia. At a later date, he spent a year in Constantinople, and again wandered over the Empire. This was the way in which he spent his youth. Karavelov was then a young man of twenty who had wandered a great deal and seen much. Koprivshtitsa, Plovdiv, Adrianople, Serbia and Constantinople opened his eyes to the world. Events took place that showed this spirited young man that there was a new era in store for the Bulgarians.

After the Crimean War, when the final, decisive phase of the Bulgarian liberation struggle was under way, Karavelov went to Russia, where he found an atmosphere of acute social and political strife. The Russian people were undergoing a spiritual upsurge unparalleled in their history. The serfs were rising in rebellion against the system which bound them. The mighty voice of Russian revolutionary democracy was making itself heard. The young intelligentsia, which came from different strata of society, was being stirred by the ideas of Hertzen, Chernishevsky, Dobrolyubov and Pissarev. The most progressive of Russia's writers and poets was united by Nekrassov's newspaper *Sovremennik* (The Contemporary). Slavophil circles, who were striving to adapt their conceptions to the new circumstances, were also seized by great agitation.

Karavelov, who was unable to enrol in the Military Academy, enrolled as an extra-mural student in the Faculty of History and Philology at Moscow University. There, he established many contacts with the Slavophiles and kept in touch with M. Pogodin, Ivan Ak-

* *Aba* — coarse woollen cloth. The *abadjia* was a weaver of such cloth or a maker of coats of *aba*.

sakov and V. Lamanski, the leaders of the Slav committees.

His keen and searching spirit, however, could not be satisfied only with spiritual intercourse with merchants who played the part of Maecenas and the official representatives of Slavophilism and Panslavism. The data that have come down to us from that time, although very scant, show that the young Karavelov was then reading the works of the leaders of revolutionary democracy, and particularly those of Hertzen.

It was in this atmosphere of acute social conflicts and powerful intellectual upsurge that Karavelov's convictions were formed, and the first literary attempts were made. He gradually emerged as one of the foremost Bulgarian writers, publicists and scholars. In 1861, he printed his famous work *Monuments of the National Life of the Bulgarians*, which, followed by a number of other works, was written to acquaint Russian society with the life and problems of oppressed Bulgaria.

Karavelov's literary and publicistic works of the Russian period (1857-1866) reveal him as a passionate patriot, a convinced Slavophil and an uncompromising opponent of Ottoman oppression and Greek spiritual domination, a fighter for the freedom and advancement of his country in bondage. At this period, however, Karavelov was still far from the radical revolutionary ideas of his time. Obsessed by Slavophil dreams, he often supported Panslavist and tsarist viewpoints.

In 1866, Karavelov left Russia and went to Serbia as a correspondent of the newspapers *Golos* (Voice) and *Moskovskiye Vedomosti* (Moscow News) and other Russian publications. In Serbia, he continued to clarify his viewpoints and began to take an ever more active interest in the political problems of the Bulgarian national liberation movement. It was at this stage that he finally formed the idea of a Southern-Slav federation, which was to be an equal union of free states. His aesthetic standpoint was also clarified. He became one of the main sources of revolutionary and modern trends in Serbian literature. One of the fruits of this work is

the famous tale *Is Fate to Blame?* which occupies an important place in the Southern Slav literature of the 19th century.

Life in Serbia, and afterwards in Austro-Hungary, where he fled after the murder of Prince Mihail III Obrenovich made it possible for Karavelov to study European literature, publicistics and philosophy, to become acquainted with the works of Bockl, William Dreyer and Auguste Comte and with the new ideas of the epoch. Karavelov was deeply impressed by the ideas of the European enlightenment and the liberal nineteenth century. "Modern mankind," wrote Karavelov in 1869, "the idea of the 'rights of a people', the fact that contemporary questions about nationality as a motive force in political life now arise, is the result of the free-thinking principles of the eighteenth century."

Karavelov's writing and social activity in Serbia was, however, soon stopped. Suspected of the murder of Mihail Obrenovich, he was arrested and confined in the Budapest gaol. Having spent 203 days in the "house of the dead", Karavelov was able to review the whole of his life as an emigré and a politician. The fruits of these thoughts appeared in his appeal and creed *My Brothers*. "We desire complete freedom," wrote Karavelov, "and for this reason we do not wish others to conquer us and enslave us, and likewise we have no wish to conquer and enslave others." Having discarded his illusions and faith in Russian tsarism and the Obrenovich dynasty, and free from vague and hackneyed Slavophil doctrines, Karavelov made a call for liberation which, in his opinion, would come about through education, national unity and a struggle against Bulgaria's enemies — the Ottoman oppressors and the Greek Phanariots.

Enriched with this ideology, Karavelov joined the Bulgarian emigrants in Bucharest in the early autumn of 1869. There he found himself in an entirely new world, an entirely new atmosphere. The associates of Rakovski, who had recently died, the most radical members of the revolutionary movement gathered in the *Bratska Lyubov* (Brotherly Love) Reading-Room and

sought new ways of liberating Bulgaria. The large Bulgarian emigrant population, which numbered more than 500,000, was in a great state of agitation. The idea that Bulgaria could only achieve political liberation with an organized uprising, and not with rebel bands was gradually gaining ground.

Immersed in this turbulent revolutionary atmosphere, Karavelov not only accepted the ideas of the radicals of the emigré population but soon became their leader. On November, 7, 1869, he began to publish the newspaper *Svoboda* (Freedom) which, together with its successor, *Nezavissimost* (Independence) extensively advocated the freedom-loving revolutionary ideas of the national movement. A revolutionary circle came into being around the *Svoboda* which, at the end of 1869 and early in 1870 became the supreme organ of the revolutionary movement under the name *Bulgarian Central Revolutionary Committee*. Lyuben Karavelov was elected as its chairman.

In Bucharest, Karavelov underwent a rapid and spontaneous evolution and adopted the most radical ideas of the national movement. He had rid himself of Slavophil illusions, the illusions of those who thought that revolution could be brought about by education alone, and of his faith in royal dynasties. The fruit of this evolution is the first *Programme of the BRCC* (Bulgarian Revolutionary Central Committee) written by Karavelov in April 1870, the ideas of which are brilliantly developed in the famous pamphlet *A Bulgarian Voice*.

Karavelov's programme envisaged "national freedom, personal freedom, religious freedom, in other words, human freedom". In the name of this ideal, Karavelov urged that Bulgaria should be cleared of "governmental and official impurity", that a "Southern Slav Federation should be formed", that "we should have dealings with not a single despotic government, and that the *chorbadjis** should be persecuted as enemies of Bulgaria." Freedom could only be attained if

* *Chorbadjis* — rich men, notables of a town or village, headmen.

the people believed in their own muscles, and if they did not wait for "Napoleon III, or Alexander II, Pius IX or Queen Victoria to come and liberate them," if they cast away the priests and the tsars, if they created a mighty revolutionary organization and, "sacrificing their lives, seize a gun, a sabre, a pistol, revolver, knife, pike, axe, scythe, club, whatever there happens to be, and to win back their own freedom and that of their country," and after that, to arrange "their state according to the best systems that the educated peoples have."

A Bulgarian Voice shows the zenith of Karavelov's ideological evolution, the moment at which he came nearest to the radical, revolutionary ideas of the national movement. Even at this moment, however, Karavelov was not able to cast off his old conceptions. He continued to waver between revolution and educationism.

These ideological waverings rapidly separated him from the consistent revolutionary activists, headed by Vassil Levski. Immediately after the creation of the Bulgarian Revolutionary Central Committee, sharp contradictions arose between them. Levski left Bucharest and went to Bulgaria. There, in 1870-1871, he created the powerful Internal Revolutionary Organization, which became the bearer of the most radical, democratic and revolutionary ideas in the national movement.

Acute differences existed between the Internal Revolutionary Organization in Bulgaria and Karavelov's Bulgarian Revolutionary Central Committee in Bucharest. Soon, however, the two movements which, in spite of the ideological, organizational and tactical differences, bore the same revolutionary charge, understood that the task of liberation demanded complete unity of the national revolutionary forces. This was the way in which the unifying meeting of the Bulgarian Revolutionary Central Committee of the end of April and the beginning of May 1872, was brought about. The general meeting in Bucharest accepted the charter and programme of the Bulgarian Revolutionary Central Committee, which were an original synthesis and a certain com-

promise between the ideological conceptions of Karavelov and Levski. Lyuben Karavelov was elected as chairman of the BRCC.

The fusion of the two movements brought about an unprecedented upsurge in the national movement. Suddenly, however, at the end of 1872, the revolutionary organization was discovered. Karavelov told Levski that an uprising must be declared immediately in order to save the honour of Bulgaria. However, the great master of revolutionary struggle refused to carry out the orders of the chairman of the BRCC because he did not want to involve the people in an action that had not yet been fully prepared. He was ready to bear the cross himself but not to endanger the work of the organization.

In February 1873, Karavelov was irritably wandering the streets of Bucharest. His soul was in a state of doubt and agitation. The thought of the people's inability to gain Bulgaria's freedom alone was stealing into his mind. The ideas of the old educationist again made themselves heard in the depths of his keen consciousness, and his former waverings between armed revolution and revolution by education, between sword and pen began again. As a result of this, Karavelov left the revolutionary movement. The talented leader of the revolution, the author of *A Bulgarian Voice*, the chairman of one of the most radical organizations of the Bulgarian liberation movement, quietly disappeared into the mists of the educationalist philosophy and once again decided to replace the sword of the revolution with the palliative and undisturbed ideas of the educationists. From 1875 Karavelov began to publish the educationalist magazine *Znaniyé* (Knowledge). Even in the period when he was publishing *Znaniyé*, however, he did not entirely withdraw from the liberation movement, and remained true to national ideals right up to the time of his death in 1879.

In Bulgarian historical literature, the personality and work of Karavelov have always provoked heated arguments which still continue to this day. Some people see in Karavelov the knight of the revolution, forgetting his waverings, his inconsistency. Others, on the

contrary, emphasize these waverings and inconsistency, the moments of spiritual weakness. They sometimes forget the ardent publicist and great apologist of freedom, forget about the tremendous spirit of the chairman of the BRCC, of the leader of the revolutionary emigrés. A third group attempted to link the two extremes, seeing in Karavelov a moderate, incomplete, inconsistent revolutionary activist and thinker. These arguments about Karavelov are not a mere matter of coincidence — they are the result of his extremely complex and contradictory nature which, in a way that is unique, combines the spirit of a great patriot and revolutionary, of the ardent publicist and journalist, of the talented writer and humorist and of the quiet and self-absorbed scholar.

Karavelov had a great mind and an ardent heart. The thinker and the dreamer in him were fused in one. He was both a great patriot and a convinced internationalist. Having tasted the fruits of many cultures and nurtured his soul with great ideas, he was the friend of the exiles, interlocutor of scholars, opponent of politicians, impetuous revolutionary and unruffled, abstract writer. When we examine his life against the background of Bulgaria's turbulent history, in the National Revival period, there is one fact that cannot be argued — and that is that Karavelov rendered immense services to the Bulgarian revolution, the course of Bulgaria's history and to her culture.

First of all, we see Karavelov as an ardent revolutionary who held the liberal-bourgeois revolutionary ideas of the 19th century. Throughout his life, with a few exceptions, he was an uncompromising opponent of mediaeval obscurantism and Asiatic barbarism, the enemy of tsars and priests, of spiritual inquisitors and political charlatans. Karavelov strove for a new, progressive bourgeois system, for political and personal freedom, for the right of nations to determine their own fates.

Karavelov was one of the most talented and prolific publicists and journalists of the National Revival period. The newspapers *Svoboda* and *Nezavissimost*,

which he edited, were enthusiastic and wise tribunes of the national revolution. They broadcast the ideology of rebellion both among the emigrants and among activists in Bulgaria, produced a large number of revolutionaries and national enlighteners and helped to strengthen Bulgarian national consciousness.

Karavelov was one of the great masters and originators of the new realistic Bulgarian literature. He wrote *Bulgarians of Old, Is Fate to Blame?*, *Mother's Darling Boy*, *Hadji Nicho*, *Neda*, *Voivoda* and *Do You Know Who We Are?* and will always be considered as one of Bulgaria's great writers. Apart from Karavelov's activities as an author and publicist, we should mention his modest, but all the same significant for his time attempts at ethnography, literary criticism, folklore and memoir-writing.

We cannot ignore the fact that Karavelov succeeded in assimilating European political thought to a degree achieved by few of his contemporaries. He generously made his immense knowledge of European and Russian literature, culture and publicism available to his contemporaries. The ideas of the European bourgeois revolution reached the Bulgarian intelligentsia through his newspapers and books and produced a whole generation of men who, following the example of their teacher, devoted their lives to Bulgaria.

Karavelov's versatile, energetic and talented life left its imprint on the history of the Bulgarian National Revival, on the formation of the spiritual image of the Bulgarian nation, and aided the battle for freedom and the building of a new world.

N. GENCHEV

HRISTO BOTEV

"He who falls in battle, fighting
for freedom, he does not die."

Hristo Botev

Hristo Botev, the immortal poet of the Bulgarian national revolution, was born in 1848 in Kalofer, in the family of the teacher Botyu Petkov. At first he studied at the school where his father taught in his native town — and even at this early stage his talents became obvious. His father, convinced of his son's ability, obtained a grant from the Russian government for his son in 1863, and Hristo entered the Classical Gymnasium at Odessa. Botev, who was in a distant country during years of turbulent political and spiritual activity, did not take much interest in the school. "It is intolerable," he wrote to his father. "The teachers and rules here are not human, they are brutal." His lively mind was constantly in search of new ideas. He read the works of the Russian revolutionary democrats and the utopian socialists with great absorption, studied the ideas of Chernishevsky, Herten, Ogaryov and Pissarev, was carried away by the social yearnings of Proudhon and fired by Bakunin's ardent programmes. Under the influence of these ideas, Botev formed the foundations of his ideology as a revolutionary, poet and thinker.

In October, 1865, Botev was expelled from the gymnasium and deported from Russia. On his return

to Kalofer, he replaced his father in the school for a certain time and quickly became the leader of local revolutionary youth in its struggle against the Ottoman overlords and their supporters — the Bulgarian *chorbadjis*. On May 11, 1867, the day on which the memory of Cyril and Methodius was honoured in Bulgarian churches and schools, Botev made a speech of rebellion against the Ottoman oppressors and the Sultan, and the treacherous *chorbadjis*. After this bitter speech which, according to eye-witnesses was “like thunder and lightning”, Botev was unable to remain in Bulgaria and, in the same year, emigrated to Bucharest.

In Rumania, Botev devoted himself to revolutionary and publicistic activities, worked as a teacher in Braïla for a certain time, and wrote poetry which has made his name immortal. In 1871 he founded the newspaper *Word of the Bulgarian Emigrés in Braïla* — this was one of the most ardent tribunes of Bulgarian National Revival period publicism. In the editorial, he exhorted the people to unity and struggle in the name of freedom and rejected the liberal waverings of the emigrés: “We must close our ranks, we must think, we must talk and we must work. If there has been a hand to ward off or stop our blows, it is already too short to cover our mouths and interrupt our words.”

After the closure of the newspaper, Botev worked for Karavelov's publications *Svoboda* and *Nezavisimost*, and then himself edited the satirical newspaper *Boudilnik* (Alarm-clock). He became friends with Vasil Levski, from whom he learnt the art of revolutionary struggle; he then met the Russian emigré Sergei Nechayev, who again returned him to the ideas of utopian socialism.

After the period he spent in Rumania (1867-1876), Botev finally formed his revolutionary and socialist-utopian ideology and became one of the most radical thinkers and publicists of the 19th century. In his *A Symbol-Creed of the Bulgarian Commune*, of April 1871, Botev confesses: “I believe in the single united force of the human race all over the earth in the doing

of good. And in the single communist system of society, the saviour of all peoples from the sorrows and struggles of centuries by brotherly labour, freedom and equality." Botev, true to his convictions, passionately defended the Paris Commune, and unceasingly offered proof that "only a rational and fraternal alliance between the peoples will be able to destroy the burdens, poverty and parasites of the human race, and only this alliance will be able to establish truth, freedom, brotherhood, equality and happiness on the face of the earth."

The political ideas of Hristo Botev are, naturally, a continuation and development of the ideas of Rakovski, Karavelov and Levski. Like his predecessors, he considered that only revolution would be able to put an end to Ottoman domination and give freedom to the oppressed peoples. At this point, however, he renounced the bourgeois-democratic ideas of his predecessors and drew up plans for the socialist society of the future, which he saw as a free organization of municipalities, of professional, cultural, women's and children's organizations, as a society without overlords. Botev's social utopia made him one of the first socialist ideologists in Bulgaria.

About 1874-1875, when, after the death of Vassil Levski and as a result of Karavelov's waverings, the BRCC in Bucharest underwent an acute political and revolutionary crisis, Hristo Botev began to establish his authority as the leader of the radical wing among the emigrés, as one of the first leaders of the BRCC. His practical activities, however, were not rewarded with success. When, in 1875, at his instigation an unsuccessful attempt at rebellion was made in Stara Zagora, Botev withdrew from the BRCC.

As opposed to those of the other great leaders of the national revolution, the services rendered by Botev consist not so much of practical revolutionary activity as of writing, fervent publicism and poetry.

Botev has given our poetry a small number of poems each of which is, however, a true revelation. To

this day, they have no equal as far as the strength of the image, social pathos and power are concerned.

Prof. B. Penev, one of the most penetrating scholars of our national literature, writes: "Botev has left us about twenty poems. Just half of them, however, are sufficient to make him immortal, if his immense feat had not already made him immortal. The personification of unfading, eternal youth, he will never grow old, neither for us nor for future generations."

"Botev's poetic works are imbued with rebellious revolutionary romanticism. The pathos of love, of joy, of sorrow, anger and hatred are the organic result of his revolutionary passion of a fighter and a dreamer.

"Without being alien to deeply human personal emotion, the poet is most famous for his tender social conscience. It is the political, social and patriotic motifs that are dominant in his poetry. His finest poems, such as *Rebels*, *Farewell*, *Hadji Dimiter*, and *The Hanging of Levski* are imbued with a spontaneously expressed love for his country, homage to the feats of its brave rebels, a delight in Bulgaria and the Bulgarian mother — and at the same time with hatred towards the oppressors of his people and pain and sympathy for his backward brothers, deprived of their rights." (B. Penev).

Botev, however, cannot be confined within the framework of national patriotism. Universal ideals of freedom, dignity and justice, of brotherhood, of social progress and spiritual perfection are the constant motifs of his works, and for this reason, Botev's inimitable apotheosis "He who falls in battle fighting for freedom, he does not die. He is mourned by earth and heaven, beasts and nature, and singers sing songs of him," sounds quite logical. Botev not only preached rebellion and revolution. He not only celebrated them brilliantly in his poetry. He himself perished in battle in the name of his great social and aesthetic ideals.

At the time of the April Uprising of 1876, Botev organized a band of 200 brave men in Rumania. In May, this band captured the Austrian steamer Radetz-

ki and landed on the Bulgarian bank of the Danube near the village of Kozlodui. In a letter written to his wife Veneta and to his friends from the decks of the ship, Botev expressed his joy at going to fight for the freedom of Bulgaria as he once dreamt of doing in his poem *My Prayer* — "that I too might find my grave in the ranks of battle." "The feeling that filled my soul," he continued, "makes me like a lion... I am gay, my joy knows no bounds when I think that *My Prayer* has indeed come to pass."

Botev's band, negotiating many obstacles and enemy posts, came to the mountains near Vratsa, where they fought a fierce battle with a large Ottoman detachment. On June 2, 1876, when night was falling and the battle was over, when Botev was examining the battle positions, an enemy bullet pierced the high, proud forehead of the revolutionary poet. In this way, his poetry and great work were fused in an eternal apotheosis of freedom; for Botev will always be regarded as one of the greatest Bulgarians who ever lived.

N. GENCHEV

DIMITER AND KONSTANTIN MILADINOV

"For, in a century deaf to the truth, they bravely awakened the national spirit, they prepared battles and a new future for their brothers, in the native tongue."

Ivan Vazov

The brothers Dimiter and Konstantin Miladinov were enthusiastic pioneers of the Bulgarian National Revival in Macedonia, who jealously fought for national education and the spiritual self-determination of their nation.

They were born of the large family of the potter Hristo Miladinov in the picturesque town of Strouga on the shores of Lake Ohrid, where the Bulgarian language and Bulgarian songs had been heard throughout the centuries. Dimiter was born in 1810, and his younger brother twenty years later. But as far as spirit and ideas, and patriotic purposefulness were concerned, both were sons of the Renaissance.

Dimiter grew up in Strouga and Ohrid in the first decades of the 19th century, when this distant part of Bulgaria was completely spiritually dominated by Greek culture. At the beginning, he studied at the St Nahum Monastery; in 1830 he graduated from the Greek school in Ohrid, and at a later date from the famous Greek gymnasium at Yanina. In this way, he emerged as a highly educated Hellenist and became a

teacher. Before beginning work in the Gymnasium, Dimiter taught in Ohrid, then in his native town, in Koukoush and again in Ohrid, then in Strouga, in the villages in the Bitolya area and in the town itself. Although he conducted the lessons in Greek, he, as one of his close friends witnessed, "transformed the system of teaching in the school, did a great deal to advance study and inspired in those towns and their surrounding villages where he taught a great love of learning and a zeal for science."

His closeness to the people helped Dimiter to rid himself of his Hellenistic enthusiasms and to begin the teaching of Bulgarian. His meeting with the Russian Slavist, Prof. Grigorievich in Ohrid in 1845 strongly influenced him in this way. Miladinov promised to write a Slav-Bulgarian grammar. In the 1850s he was already fully aware of the necessity of Bulgarian education in Macedonia and he gradually turned into one of the most enthusiastic advocates of the introduction of the Bulgarian language into the schools in that area.

It was just at that time that his younger brother Konstantin, who had grown up close to him, also took the difficult path of Bulgarian education.

Konstantin unswervingly adhered to the way of life and ideals of Dimiter. At the beginning, he studied with him in Strouga, Ohrid and Koukoush. Then he, too, graduated from the Yanina Gymnasium. From 1849 he studied and graduated in Greek philology in Athens and became a teacher, too. After the Crimean War Dimiter sent him to Russia. There, from 1856 to 1860, he studied Slavonic philology at Moscow University. Together with other young Bulgarians, he published his first attempts at poetry and the results of his research. During the time he spent in Moscow, the leaders of the Bulgarian national revolution, Lyuben Karavelov and Georgi Rakovski, strongly influenced him.

One of the things that most occupied Konstantin Miladinov while in Russia was the printing of the album *Bulgarian Folk Songs*, which had been collected

from South-West Bulgaria. Having failed to interest Russian Slavophil circles, he turned to the Croatian Bishop of Dyakovo, Yossif Strossmeier, for assistance. Strossmeier was one of the most convinced champions of South Slav unity in the 19th century, and a sincere friend of the Bulgarians.

When he had received his co-operation, Konstantin immediately left for Vienna, and over the next two years (1860-61) prepared the anthology and, on the insistence of the Bishop, published it in Zagreb in 1861, in the Cyrillic and not the Greek script. At a later date, Strossmeier remembered his young friend with affection: "He was a modest, kindly, hard-working lad — naive and extremely patriotic — a truly living image of his own worthy Bulgarian people."

While Konstantin was studying in Moscow and arranging the publication of *Bulgarian Folk Songs* in Vienna, Dyakovo and Zagreb, his elder brother was in a spate of feverish cultural activity. He gradually established himself as the leading cultural activist in the South-Western regions of Bulgaria.

Having spent several months wandering in Serbia and Austro-Hungary, Dimiter Miladinov worked as a teacher in Prilep. Between 1857 and 1859, he restored the schools in Koukoush, introduced the Bulgarian language into them and devised a project for the foundation of a central Bulgarian gymnasium which would be a bulwark against Greek influence. For this purpose, he even turned to the Russian Emperor for aid. He supervised the schools in other towns, recruited and sent Bulgarian teachers to the places where the Greek priests still held sway in the schools.

As well as his work in the schools, Dimiter Miladinov continued to collect folk songs, translated prayer-books for the Bulgarian churches that were being opened in the South-western regions, led the struggle against the Uniate movement which had chosen Koukoush as its centre. It was there that Miladinov became a true leader of the drive for Bulgarian education.

In 1859, Dimiter Miladinov left Koukoush and returned to Strouga, his native town. His activities con-

tinued in the same way there. He led the fight of the people of Ohrid for an independent Bulgarian church hierarchy. He led massive demonstrations against the Greek bishop, Miletius, and collected thousands of signatures.

Having made his mark as a national leader, in 1860 he was entrusted with the mission of touring several towns to collect money for the building of the Bulgarian church in Constantinople by the Bulgarian colony in this city, which at that time played a leading role in Bulgaria's cultural rebirth. Miladinov showed inexhaustible energy in this task as well. He toured the towns, contacted the Bulgarian communities and aroused a wave of national discontent against the Greek priests. The latter, however, were not slow in taking their revenge on their powerful opponent. Dimitar Miladinov was denounced by the Bishop of Bitolya as a rebel, an opponent of the Sublime Porte and a Russian agent. In February 1861, he was arrested by the Turkish powers. He spent several months in the Bitolya prison, after which he was taken away to Constantinople as a dangerous enemy of the Turkish Empire.

When his dismayed friends watched him taken away to prison, silent and hopeless, he turned to them, saying: "Why are you frightened, children? Human life is but a handful of blood, shall I be frightened by so little? I am going to a loyal death, but the Bulgarian people will not die with me, they will remain alive, and one day will be resurrected, and then they will have regard for my blood, too. I sowed the seed, and you must live to reap the harvest."

When Dimitar was languishing in the prisons of Constantinople, his younger brother was hastening back to Bulgaria in order to gladden him with the greatest achievement of their lives — the anthology entitled *Bulgarian Folk Songs*. It was in Belgrade that he learnt of his brother's fate and immediately set off for Constantinople in order to aid him. Almost immediately after his arrival, however, he was also arrested and cast into prison.

The tragic fate of the two brothers outraged the

whole of Bulgaria — Macedonia, Thrace and Moesia. This also attracted the attention of people in other countries. The Russian Embassy in Constantinople intervened on their behalf, and so did the Austrian government on the insistence of Strossmeier, but the Sublime Porte pursued its aim — to rid itself of the two great brothers who, together with their associates, had aroused Macedonia to a new life.

The brothers were accused of being Russian agents and died one after the other in the ghastly dungeons of the Constantinople prison, deprived of bread and sunshine. The cause of their death was typhoid fever, which took the life of Konstantin on January 6 or 7, and that of Dimiter on January 10 or 12, 1862.

Little is known of the last days of the Miladinov brothers. For many years, support has been given to the version that they were poisoned by the Turkish police, but this rumour is still unconfirmed.

Thus, the two brothers wrote their names on the pages of Bulgarian history and occupy a prominent place among the brilliant gallery of the Bulgarian National Revival period. Their most important achievement is undoubtedly the anthology *Bulgarian Folk Songs*, "collected by the Miladinov brothers Dimiter and Konstantin and published by Konstantin", Zagreb, 1861. There are 665 songs and 23,559 verses included in this huge volume. They have been divided into several sections: fairy, church, heroic, shepherds', rebel, dirges, comic, love, wedding, St Lazarus's Day and reapers' songs.

These songs reveal an immense national and universal wealth. There are also many descriptions of children's games, the wedding customs of Koukoush and Strouga, the rites associated with annual festivals, national legends, tales, proverbs, riddles and personal names.

This document of Slav folklore study is brilliant proof that the songs sung in Macedonia throughout the centuries are Bulgarian songs created by Bulgarian people.

N. GENCHEV

PETKO RACHEV SLAVEYKOV

"The struggle carried him away so that he forgot himself, his attention was entirely absorbed by its progress and success — it is here that he tempered his will, and in its ardour, spiritual suffering could be borne."

Boyan Penev

Petko Rachev Slaveykov is one of the most colourful and versatile personalities in Bulgarian life in the 19th century. The founder of the new Bulgarian literature and poetry, a fervent publicist folklorist and historian, a national enlightener who was for many years a teacher, an eminent political activist, a fighter for the rights of the people — these activities filled the long and eventful life of Petko Slaveykov.

He was born in November, 1827 in the former Bulgarian capital of Turnovo, in the family of the copper-smith Racho Slaveykov. His father was a rebel and a participant in the conspiracy organized by the tradesmen and craftsmen of Turnovo against Turkish domination in 1835, known in history as Velcho's Conspiracy. Petko went to school when he was scarcely five years old. As well as studying, he accompanied his father to fairs in order to sell the copper vessels made by the smith. The old "cell" school, with its scholastic quality and limited horizons could not satisfy the alert and curious mind of the future writer and public figure. After ten years of trying to learn the Acts of the Apostles

and the prayer-book off by heart, Slaveykov left the school and began to educate himself with great fervour. He read everything he could lay his hands upon, read the works of the first Bulgarian authors, became acquainted with Russian literature, wandered from one monastery to the next in search of old books, manuscripts, damascenes and apocryphal texts. Païssiy's *Slav-Bulgarian History* influenced him very strongly. "Païssiy's History," he wrote, "brought me to the threshold of new ideas on nationality."

In 1843, this young man opened a private school in Turnovo and thus began his many years of educational activity. Apart from his teaching, he also joined the struggle of the citizens of Turnovo against the Greek bishop, Neophyte, and wrote an extremely popular article against him, because of which he was expelled from the school and from Turnovo. Many years of wandering and persecution were to follow — he toured the villages in the Turnovo area as a teacher and was hounded everywhere, and afterwards returned as an apprentice to his father's workshop. He again began the wretched life of a teacher with the tousled urchins of Sevlievo, Lovech, Pleven, Vratsa, Berkovitsa and Vidin, and then settled for a longer period in Tryavna.

Thus passed Slaveykov's youth — years of wandering spent close to the people, years of spiritual and political progress to maturity. As well as his teaching, Slaveykov took an ardent part in the political and church struggles, determined his standpoint and laid the foundations of his poetry and prose-writing, became acquainted with the revolutionary ideas of the time, to develop gradually into one of the most famous activists of Bulgaria's cultural and political revival.

After the Crimean War, Slaveykov went to Constantinople where, in the Autumn of 1857, he was appointed as a teacher at the newly-opened Bulgarian school in Fener. He was quickly expelled from there, however, because of his political satires. He again returned to his native town, and spent a certain time teaching in Gorna Djoumaya. From 1863 to 1867, Slaveykov published the humorous newspaper *Gaida* (Bagpipe) in

Constantinople. He spent ten years working in the large Bulgarian colony in the capital of the Turkish Empire, achieving memorable feats of Bulgarian National Revival period publicism. The next object to claim his attention was his newspaper *Macedonia*, the most popular Bulgarian newspaper of the period of Turkish domination. As well as his activities as a publicist, Slaveykov also engaged most actively in the final rounds of the Bulgarian struggle against Greek power in the church and in the foundation of the Bulgarian Exarchate from 1870 to 1872, in the work of the Constantinople library club which, before the creation of the Exarchate, played the role of a national Bulgarian cultural centre.

In 1872, the Turkish government banned the *Macedonia*. Slaveykov, who was without means of support, was unable to feed his large family and was forced to leave Constantinople and to become a teacher in Stara Zagora. He was there at the time of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78 and the Liberation of Bulgaria.

Slaveykov became a much-loved and very popular political leader in his liberated fatherland. As one of the first Bulgarian members of parliament in the Constituent Assembly for the formation of a Constitution for the Principality of Bulgaria, Slaveykov made brilliant speeches full of humour and wisdom and defended the democratic principles of the Turnovo Constitution. In 1880, he became Minister of the Interior. He then headed the Liberal Party in its struggle to preserve the Constitution against the attempts of Prince Alexander of Battenberg and the conservatives to suspend the Constitution and to introduce an anti-democratic régime. Slaveykov was forced to emigrate to Eastern Rumelia because of persecution for his activities; there, together with his friend Petko Karavelov, he continued to defend the democratic rights of the poorer people.

Slaveykov again devoted a great deal of his energies to journalism after the Liberation. He was the founder and editor of the Liberal Party newspapers *Tselokoupna Bulgaria* (All Bulgaria), *Nezavissimost* (Independence), *Turnovska Konstitutsia*, *Istina* (Truth) and *Pravda* (Justice).

As far as political principles were concerned, Slaveykov remained true to the interests of the people right up to the end of his life, he was an enthsaistic advocate of the Bulgarian National Revival period ideals of freedom, democracy and social progress.

Petko Rachev Slaveykov is undoubtedly the best known of Bulgaria's writers and poets. He is one of the founders of modern Bulgarian literature and one of the pillars of our modern culture. In his first creative period — from 1843 to 1857 — Slaveykov wrote historical and patriotic verses filled with the spirit of rebellion, and sentimental and love poems. The whole of his work from this period is close to folklore and bound to the fate of the enslaved people. Most of his early works have an imitative character.

After 1857, Slaveykov had already matured as a poet, and wrote stirring and original patriotic verse and poetry which mark his literary path from romanticism to critical realism. In the years of his maturity, Slaveykov turned his attention to the realities of the National Revival period, to the life and needs of the people.

"In his poetry," writes an expert on Slaveykov, "the *chorbadjis*, priests and social parasites, bearers of conservatism and ignorance, are sharply revealed. He speaks with pain and sympathy of the sufferings of the masses, of the 'poor brothers'; courage, patriotism, the faith of the democratic activist are the things that emerge... the democratic public figure and patriot sincerely suffers for the fate of his people and is not far distant from the revolutionary path to the removal of these burdens — this is the basic lyrical hero in Slaveykov's poetry."

Slaveykov's works, together with those of Lyuben Karavelov, Hristo Botev, Vassil Droumev, Ivan Vazov and other Bulgarian National Revival period writers laid the foundations of the modern Bulgarian language and created one of the nation's most powerful weapons — its modern written and spoken language which is based mainly on the East Bulgarian dialects.

Slaveykov rendered an immense service to the study

of folklore, ethnography and historiography. His contemporaries described him as an extremely intelligent, enterprising, vital and erudite man who rather resembled a living encyclopaedia, full of the wisdom of the people, their songs, tales and proverbs, ready at any moment to mock baseness with national proverbs and sayings and to express the joy of the people in the most enthusiastic way.

Slaveykov is one of the most eminent figures in the world of culture who managed to link Bulgaria's budding literature with that of the advanced nations of Europe. Throughout his life, he propagated, translated and published the works of the giants of Russian literature of the 19th century. He was also an enthusiastic champion of pan-Slav cultural association, and a propagator of the best examples of European romantic and realist literature.

When one considers the lives of such men as Slaveykov, one frequently wonders how it was possible to accomplish so many feats useful to the nation in the course of a human life, to write literary, publicistic and scientific works, to lead such a full-blooded and socially useful existence. The answer to this question turns our eyes to the greatness of the National Revival period — which itself is a model of strength, wisdom and greatness.

N. GENCHEV

DIMITER BLAGOEV

"In my opinion, he who has never fought a fight that is virtuous and useful for society and mankind in his life, who is troubled by nothing, whose soul has never delighted in the enchanting, the ideal, the beautiful -- he is not a person."

D. Blagoev, 1880

When we speak of the masses being the creators of history, we are often inclined to underestimate the role of historical personalities, to see their significance only as spokesmen of one social group or another, of political and social trends. In fact, the greatest historical personalities who appeared under various social and economic conditions have exerted a particularly strong individual influence on the conduct of social groups, in the struggle accompanying various trends and have left their own mark on public phenomena.

One of these personalities was Dimiter Blagoev, the founder of the socialist movement in Bulgaria, the most eminent Marxist in the Balkans at the end of the 19th century and in the first two decades of the twentieth. Both as far as his character and intellect are concerned, as a figure with a definite standpoint, he was the dominant personality in the Bulgarian socialist movement right up to the time of his death in 1924.

Blagoev was born on June 14, 1856 in the small village of Zagorichené, near Kostour, which is now

in Greek Macedonia. It seemed that he was fated to grow up in and be influenced by this backward village with its unqualified teachers. However, Georgi Kostadinov, or *Daskal* (school master) Dinkata, as he was known by the villagers, was appointed as a teacher in this distant mountain village. He was an ardent patriot who had studied in Russia and was familiar with the ideas of the Russian revolutionary democrats, and imbued his small pupils with love for their own country, a love of knowledge and a materialistic viewpoint. "I personally owe him a very great deal," Blagoev confessed in the last years of his life. "He aroused my curiosity." Blagoev was to possess this curiosity to the end of his life.

As a young boy of 15, Blagoev went to Constantinople in order to learn a craft. When he heard that there was a Bulgarian school there, the young apprentice left the cobbler's workshop and presented himself to the teacher. This teacher was Petko Slaveykov, the eminent Bulgarian National Revival poet, journalist and public figure. For several years in succession, he followed his teacher unwaveringly — in Constantinople, Adrianople and Stara Zagora — and was inspired by his patriotism and his example of selfless service to his people.

Blagoev's schooldays coincided with the zenith of the national revolutionary movement. This was the time of Levski's untiring journeys from one end of Bulgaria to the other, of the development of the revolutionary organization. This was the time of Karavelov's newspapers and Botev's poetry. This was the time when the Bulgarians of Sredna Gora directed the cherry-wood cannon against the barbarity of an empire and against the indifference of civilized Europe, when a war between Russia and Turkey brought the ancient nation of the Bulgarians back to life. It was in this great and turbulent era that Blagoev was propagating the idea of liberation among the Macedonian emigrés in Constantinople, aiding the revolutionaries of Gabrovo in 1876, and writing his leaflets denouncing the *chorbadjis* of Stara Zagora; he met the Russian army of liberation

and carried bread and water to the Bulgarian detachments defending Stara Zagora.

This was the social and political climate in which Blagoev grew up and became a man. If it were possible to portray him spiritually at the moment when he set off to study in Russia, we should depict a young man imbued with Bulgarian national revolutionary ideology, patriotic, utterly dedicated to the task of national liberation and ready to serve with all his strength and abilities; we should see an exploring mind which pursued an answer to the eternal questions about the meaning of life, or human existence; we should perceive a sensitive nature which greatly suffered from evil and baseness, which regarded life as a struggle with "evil people and evil fate" and found the reason for human existence in "a virtuous fight that is useful to society". As a student in Russia, Blagoev remained true to this altruistic philosophy. There he aimed not at ensuring a career and prosperity for himself, but at satisfying his search for moral values that the Bulgarian environment was unable to give him.

The atmosphere he encountered in Russia greatly stimulated his development. If he had arrived there just a few years earlier, he undoubtedly would have become a *narodnik* (populist). At that time, Russia was being torn by a revolutionary crisis. This revolutionary upsurge was headed by the populists, the driving force of which was the peasantry. The first meetings that Blagoev attended were populist meetings. The entire revolutionary literature with which he was acquainted was also populist. The climax of this crisis was the assassination of the Russian Emperor Alexander III, which was followed by a fierce backlash of reaction.

Having studied the populist ideology, Blagoev still felt unsatisfied. The defeat of the movements was to him a practical proof of the unsuitability of populist theory and practice. This was not the path that must be taken. Blagoev, in his search for the right path, came to Marxism.

The fact that the entire theoretic wealth of Karl

Marx and Friedrich Engels was not available to Blagoev and the influence of conditions in backward tsarist Russia, and later in Bulgaria, were to leave their mark on his Marxist standpoint. It is not the fact that as far as some questions were concerned he was not able to achieve a Marxist approach that deserves attention, but that under these conditions he constructed and defended his basic revolutionary Marxist position which is most interesting. The most important point is that for him Marxism was not an abstract theory but a means in the revolutionary struggle, a weapon for the transformation and reconstruction of the world. On his initiative, one of the first Russian socialist organizations — the Russian Social Democrat Party, which is also known as “Blagoev’s Group” was founded and the publication of the illegal newspaper *Rabochii* commenced. Blagoev was expelled from Russia for these activities.

In the summer of 1885, the periodical *Suvremenii Pokazatel* began to appear in Sofia. Its existence was a short one — only three numbers were published — but it left its mark on Bulgarian history. It was in this periodical that the first attempts at socialist propaganda were made in Bulgaria. Blagoev, who had just returned from Russia, was editor-in-chief. He was, in fact, the author of all three issues which he filled with articles of his own and translated materials.

In Bulgaria, Blagoev had to adapt his conceptions which had been formed in tsarist Russia to the conditions in his own country. The main slogans of the Russian revolutionary movement were for land and freedom, against the landowners and tsarism. In Bulgaria, smallholding was the dominant feature and the Turnovo Constitution guaranteed a fair amount of political freedom. In Russia, in spite of her backwardness, capitalism had developed considerably and there was a large proletariat. In Bulgaria, capitalism was just at the beginning of its development and the working class was barely beginning to be formed. Beginning socialist propaganda with the periodical *Suvremenii Pokazatel* and at that the propaganda of scientific socialism, of Marxism, Blagoev met the requirements of objective

development rather than those of the tasks that confronted him in the immediate future. People who were highly educated for their time and who studied the social and economic life of the country were startled by its originality and concluded that Bulgaria would remain a petit-bourgeois state, that her future was in production on a small scale and that conditions for the development of capitalism did not exist. It seemed as if these conclusions were to be confirmed by actual conditions in Bulgaria.

Blagoev was the first to prove that the general rules of social development were also valid for Bulgaria. He frequently had to make painstaking searches for proof of his thesis. His main argument was frequently to be found in theory, and not in the concrete facts of Bulgarian life. Its future development confirmed the basic and most important part of his prophecies. Even at the very beginning, Blagoev had no great faith in national traits, and even neglected them. This one-sidedness was, after a time, to hinder the revolutionary manoeuvrability of the party. At that time, however, this approach aided Blagoev in emerging victorious in polemics with bourgeois and petit-bourgeois ideologists and also in the inner polemics of the socialist movement.

Five years passed after the closure of the periodical *Svremenii Pokazatel*, in which Blagoev took no decisive step in the organization of socialist forces in Bulgaria. These were five years of detailed study both of Marxism and of the particular features of Bulgaria's social and economic development. These were five years in which the development of Bulgaria moved along the road to capitalism at an increased rate, and socialist ideas gained a greater influence among the young Bulgarian working class and the intelligentsia.

In the summer of 1891, on Blagoev's initiative, the members of Bulgaria's socialist groups met on the summit of Mt Bouzloudja in the Balkan Range. They decided to form the Bulgarian Social-Democratic Party, adopted its programme and charter and planned its future activities. The historical significance of the cong-

ress on Mt Bouzloudja is in the fact that it showed the growing workers' movement the path to scientific socialism and subjugated its economic struggle to its final aim — socialism; it also showed how this aim was to be achieved — in uncompromising class struggle.

Blagoev and his associates, who had founded the Marxist party of the Bulgarian working class were intelligent, educated and able men who would have had every opportunity for a career and a prosperous life if they had wished to conform to the norms of bourgeois society. They scorned their own personal well-being, however, in order to devote their lives to socialism, to a future that they did not expect to live to see. They were a mere handful, but seriously alarmed the rich and the ruling class. They were persecuted and mocked, anathematized and jeered at. The middle class regarded them as enemies of morality and the sanctity of the family, the pious — as antichrist, and the peasants, as people who had come to take their land away from them. In spite of all this, they defended their convictions, fired by belief in justice and in the future, because they were convinced that they were serving the interests of the people. It is in this that their great moral achievement is to be found.

The party founded by Blagoev was named "narrow," and "narrow" in many cases was a synonym for "Blagoev's party." Such a complete identity between the personality of the party leader and the party he led is rarely to be found. Apart from this, Blagoev had no particular personal power in the party itself. He was merely a member of the Central Committee and editor of the theoretical party organ *Novo Vremé*. His position as undisputed leader was due to his exceptional personality.

In essays on Blagoev, it has been fairly pointed out that his uncompromising attitude towards opportunism was not always accompanied by a concrete approach to the realities of life in Bulgaria. This shortcoming is the result of the conditions under which he worked. The petit-bourgeois climate always constituted a danger to the formation of the Social-Democratic Party, and

threatened to distract it from its historical mission. The large number of petit-bourgeois theories and movements in the Bulgaria of that time would have easily absorbed a reformist, radical, political programme, although it was Marxist. The only way in which the Party could survive, and be sure of its right to existence was its sharp divorce from petit-bourgeois ideology and its adoption of unconditionally Marxist principles.

Blagoev's theoretical weaknesses, and those of his party were in general connected with the final aim of the workers' movement and the ways in which it was to be achieved. There was still no revolutionary situation in Bulgaria, and this meant that the aforementioned shortcomings had no fatal effect on the activities of the party. His revolutionary virtues were the ones that were necessary as far as the immediate tasks of the Party were concerned: the organization of the working class, the introduction of a socialist way of thinking into the workers' movement, and the management of the political and economic struggles of the proletariat. These virtues were to be seen most clearly in the Party's fight against opportunism and the virile internationalist stand of Blagoev and the "narrow" socialist during the First World War.

Under Blagoev's direction, the Bulgarian Marxists carried on a stubborn fight against opportunism both in the Bulgarian and in the international socialist movement. Apart from this, they also paved the way for an organizational break with the opportunists. "Contradictions as far as principles are concerned," wrote Blagoev, "and the simultaneous existence of two sets of principles in a single party leads to the destruction of that party as a fighting social-democrat party!" It must be "one of the two," he warned, "either the workers' social-democrat party, the party of revolutionary socialism, or the petit-bourgeois opportunist party." The Bulgarian Revolutionary Social-Democratic Party was one of the first socialist parties in Europe which — as early as 1903 — made an ideological and organizational break with opportunism, which served as an example to revolutionary Marxists in other countries.

Blagoev also rejected the attempts at revision of Marxism which were fashionable at the beginning of the 20th century. His theoretical struggle against the attempts of the German socialist, E. Bernstein, to revise Marx's teaching was an important part of the campaign against revisionism on an international scale. Blagoev became one of the most consistent representatives of the left-wing in the European socialist movement, which was confronted with the historical task of preserving the revolutionary nature of the scientific socialism created by Marx and Engels.

Blagoev, who was endowed with proverbial self-discipline, did not hesitate to enter into conflict with the predominant trends in the Second International as soon as he perceived a retreat from revolutionary theory and practice. At the outbreak of the First World War, when the International had taken a nationalist stand, Blagoev broke with it without hesitation. He was one of the few European social democrat leaders who remained true to the principles of internationalism over the period of the war. His conduct was the result of the whole of the previous development of the Party. His uncompromising attitude to social chauvinism on an international scale was the natural result of the constant war waged by the BRSDC (left-wing socialists, against opportunism in its own ranks).

In connection with this, it is interesting to observe Blagoev's attitude to G. V. Plekhanov. Blagoev's article *Magister Dixit* was in fact a public break with the man whom he had until then considered as his teacher. The significance of this article, regarded from the psychological point of view, is immense. Plekhanov's authority was not the least factor among the many reasons that did not permit Blagoev to get his bearings in the disputes among the Russian social democrats after the first Russian revolution. *Magister Dixit* was proof of the necessity of overcoming personal feelings in the name of an ideological change. This article was the prerequisite for a new stage in Blagoev's ideological development, and that of the party of the "narrow" or left-wing socialists.

At the outbreak of the October Revolution, Blagoev was already over 60 years of age — an age at which ideological transformations most rarely take place. It was just at this age that Blagoev began to expand his ideology to bring it into line with the new revolutionary epoch. He wrote a series of articles about Lenin's teachings on imperialism. He argued the need for new slogans and aims for the Party. The programme declaration of the Bulgarian Communist Party (1919), which marked the rearming of the Party with the ideas of Leninism, was devised with the active participation of Blagoev. He was a delegate to the Third Party Congress of 1921, at which a new policy towards the peasants was adopted.

Blagoev's drive at ideological rearmament after the October Revolution was the most stirring expression of his untiring, eternally young creative spirit.

ILCHO DIMITROV

GOTSE DELCHEV

"I see the world only as a place for
cultural rivalry between its peoples."

G. Delchev

According to the ill will of the great powers, which was set down on paper in Berlin in 1878, Macedonia, Adrianople and the Mediterranean part of Thrace were returned to the Sultan, as provinces of his impoverished and dying empire. However, the population of these lands, which had been Bulgarian throughout the centuries, refused to accept the whims of the great powers: they did not wish to be cut off from their brothers in Danubian Bulgaria, the Dobroudja and Thrace. Immediately after the Berlin Congress, a strong movement for the unification of Bulgaria was formed; this was, naturally, a continuation of the national liberation struggles. The fight for the liberation and unification of Bulgaria, which had produced the Unity Committee during the Kresnen Uprising of 1879, bands of rebels and the Bulgarian education movement in Thrace and Macedonia, reached its peak in the Secret Macedonian and Adrianople Revolutionary Organization which was formed in 1893, and the Uprising on St Elijah's Day organized by the Committee, which took place in 1903.

The Bulgarian national liberation movement in Macedonia and Thrace produced many national leaders, ardent fighters for freedom, disciples of Rakovski, Levski, Karavelov and Botev. The most interesting of them is Gotsé Delchev.

Gotsé Delchev was born in January 1872, at Koukoush — one of the centres of the Bulgarian cultural and political revival which was razed to the ground by the Greeks in 1913. He spent his childhood and youth in the large patriarchal family of Nikola and Sultana Delchev, studied at the Koukoush Bulgarian School with excellent results, lived with the legends of the Koukoush area and was filled with dreams of travel and adventure.

In the autumn of 1888, Gotsé Delchev entered the famous Salonica Gymnasium — the greatest centre of Bulgarian culture and education in Macedonia in the last quarter of the 19th century. Life in this large town, the discussions that took place in the various school clubs and the knowledge that was so hungrily devoured and taught by the best Bulgarian teachers of that time, all moulded the character and outlook of the young Gotsé. The living ideas of the National Revival stimulated him and his friends into searching for ways of liberating Macedonia. Perhaps it was this that made him enrol in the Military School at Sofia. "As soon as he graduated from the sixth class," wrote the poet P. K. Yavorov in his memories of Delchev, "he went to Koukoush, kissed the hands of his tearful parents, bade farewell to his five sisters and three younger brothers, came to Bulgaria and donned the uniform of a junior course cadet."

At the Military School, Delchev mastered the art of war, so necessary for those who wished to fight for the freedom of Macedonia. He was also attracted by the socialist ideas of the time, because of which he was expelled from the School in the autumn of 1894 without being granted a commission.

Gotsé immediately returned to oppressed Macedonia, in which the storm of rebellion was gathering. Between 1893 and 1894, a group of young patriots had founded a secret revolutionary organization, the aim of which was to win political autonomy for Macedonia and the area of Adrianople and which propagated revolutionary ideas among the Bulgarians, calling for a general uprising.

Over the next two years, Gotsé taught in Shtip. There, he launched into an energetic revolutionary campaign and became one of the leading members of the Secret Macedonian and Adrianople Revolutionary Organization. Because of his abilities and ardent patriotism, he quickly became the leader of the organization. At the organization's Salonica congress of 1896, Gotsé Delchev, together with another great figure, Gyorché Petrov, devised and offered a new constitution which defined the revolutionary-democratic platform of the SMARO (The Secret Macedonian and Adrianople Revolutionary Committee).

After the Congress, Gotsé Delchev became the leader of the revolutionary campaign in Macedonia just like his great teacher, Vassil Levski. He continually roamed the Salonica *vilayet* (administrative area in the Turkish Empire), founded revolutionary committees, taught for a short time in Bansko, and then settled in Sofia as a representative of the revolutionary organization. It was during this tense period of revolutionary activity, when he was in contact with the most progressive figures of the world of Bulgarian culture at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries that Gotsé finally formed his revolutionary views and political conceptions.

Although he was conscious of the fact that Macedonia and Thrace had been in Bulgarian hands for centuries and that their fate would always be connected with that of the remaining parts of Bulgaria, Gotsé did not make an elementary stand for the immediate unification of Macedonia and Thrace with a liberated Bulgaria as he was aware of the complexity of the Macedonian question and the desire of the Great Powers and of Greece and Serbia to speculate with the natural wishes of the people for freedom and self-determination. He considered that Macedonia and Thrace should cast off the Turkish yoke by means of a national revolution carried out by all oppressed national groups, headed by the Bulgarians, who were the most compact and organized element. He considered that the Macedonia of the future should be organized on the lines of the revolu-

tionary platform of the SMARO and on democratic economic and political principles. When they had gained true equality, all the peoples of Macedonia would live in brotherly union.

These ideas are greatly reminiscent of the political platform of Vassil Levski and, for the end of the 19th century, were the most realistic and radical programme for the solution of the Macedonian question and for the unification of Bulgaria.

The ideas of Gotsé Delchev and his early associates educated and prepared a large army of faithful followers dedicated to the Bulgarian liberation movement, mobilized large number of peasants and artisans from Thrace and Macedonia in the uncompromising struggle against Turkish domination. They can only be compared with the ideas of Vassil Levski in their strength and effect. The great fascination of Gotsé Delchev, who was undisputed leader of the SMARO, is not only due to his revolutionary ideas, however. Like Vassil Levski, he was an exceptionally noble and honourable man. "Gotsé Delchev was a just man with a dagger in his belt," wrote one of his contemporaries. "Legend represents him as a fierce whirlwind. It is true that his bravery was unparalleled, but Gotsé Delchev was a dreamer more than anything else. He was a born apostle. The thought of oppression raised a rebellion in his soul. His mind was consumed by dreams of reorganizing society. A constant stream of many-faceted idealism flowed from him."

The revolutionary element of the leader of the Bulgarian national movement in Macedonia and Thrace was manifested with particular strength on the eve of the Uprising of St Elijah's Day. After the Salonica Congress of 1903 had decided to call for an uprising, in spite of the disagreement of the leaders who were in Sofia, Gotsé Delchev immediately went to Macedonia to make a study of the situation, to guard against foolhardy actions, to give guidance to the movement in its task. On May 2, 1903, however, he and the 40 members of the band who had followed him were surrounded by Turkish troops in the village of Banitsa, Seres district. He tried to bring his band out of the village, to protect

it from destruction. Gotsé was struck by an enemy bullet, and did not live to lead the glorious Uprising of St Elijah's Day.

Gotsé Delchev is one of the most fascinating personalities in Bulgarian history. All his life, he dreamed of dedicating himself to peaceful cultural activities, but fate compelled him to become a knight of the revolution. He fulfilled his task brilliantly and proved that without freedom culture can bear no fruit.

NIKOLAI GENCHEV

ALEXANDER STAMBOLIYSKI

"I find a man's recognition not in the security of his life, but in his constant readiness for self-denial and self-sacrifice."

Alexander Stamboliyski

Alexander Stamboliyski was born on March 1, 1879 in the village of Slavovitsa, Pazardjik district. Having grown up in the patriarchal atmosphere of the Bulgarian village and been bred up in its misery and hopes, he bound his fate to that of the suffering peasants at a very early age, and remained faithful to them to the very end of his life. From his early childhood, Stamboliyski strove to serve the peasant cause through science. His studies in the Agricultural School at Sadovo, in the Vine-growers' School at Pleven, and finally in the agricultural faculty in Germany produced a well-educated specialist. Soon, however, the conflicts of public life were to turn his interests elsewhere.

The Bulgarian Agrarian National Union was founded in 1899. Stamboliyski was one of the founders in the constituent congress of the Union and one of its first ideologists. As early as 1904, when he was barely 25 years old, he was appointed as editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Zemedelsko Znamé* — the organ of the Bulgarian Agrarian Union — which became the powerful political and professional tribune of the Bulgarian peasants; this appointment was due to his brilliant gifts as a publicist. The newspaper, edited by Stamboliyski, be-

came the main ideological weapon of the BAU. The political platform and organizational principles of the Union were worked out on its pages. At about 1908, because of his clear mind and foresight, Stamboliyski was accepted as undisputed leader of the BAU in Bulgaria.

He made his appearance on the political scene on the eve of the First World War — at a fatal moment when Bulgaria was confronted by many problems, the biggest of which was the question of national unification. Stamboliyski, who had just entered the political battles, took a brave stand; he declared himself to be against Radoslavov's policy of Bulgarian participation in the First World War on the side of imperial Germany, which he considered would be fatal for Bulgaria. A memorable event in Stamboliyski's biography was his meeting with Tsar Ferdinand on September 4, 1915, at which he boldly stated that he was against the alliance with Germany, and told to Tsar: "You think you will follow your path. . . . And if you decide to follow the same path now (he meant the Second Balkan War of 1913), you will lose your head." In spite of his immunity as a member of parliament, Stamboliyski was arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment.

During the First World War, Stamboliyski was in prison. It was there that he wrote his famous work, *The Principles of the BAU*, and led the Agrarian Union which, under the conditions of the War, was deeply split. It was on the eve of the national disaster, on September 24, 1918, that Ferdinand freed the prisoner in order to make use of the authority he enjoyed among the troops to stop the mutiny in the army.

Stamboliyski immediately left for the front — not, however, to carry out the orders of the Tsar, but to harness the revolutionary spirit that filled the ranks for the good of Bulgaria. When he had convinced himself that the front was no longer tenable, he agreed to a mutiny. On September 27, the rebel troops proclaimed the Radomir Republic and elected Alexander Stamboliyski as its president.

Stamboliyski's authority increased immensely after the war. The BAU, which he led, proved to be one of

the few political forces able to halt the collapse that followed the national disaster. In this way, Stamboliyski came to the forefront of political life and took upon himself the government of the country in the most difficult period of its existence. In October 1919, he formed a coalition government and in May of the following year, led a homogeneous Agrarian cabinet.

The Agrarian Government, headed by Stamboliyski, governed Bulgaria from 1920 to 1923. In the spirit of the BAU's ideology, he attempted to reform the bourgeois society of the day in the interests of the peasants, to do away with his country's isolation, both internationally and in the Balkans, to create conditions for the spread of bourgeois democracy and to make a stand against the emerging fascist-totalitarian forces.

The government's programme and Stamboliyski's ambitions, however, remained unrealized. On June 9, 1923, fascist forces in the army carried out a coup during the night and toppled the BAU from power. At that time, Stamboliyski was in his native village. When he learnt of the coup, he marshalled a peasant army of several thousand, but it was too late. He himself was captured and brutally murdered on June 14 in his villa near Slavovitsa.

Alexander Stamboliyski was one of the most popular Bulgarian politicians of the 20th century. His reputation as a national leader is mostly due to the programme that he introduced, a programme which made a deep impression on the petty-bourgeois mentality of peasant Bulgaria. According to the political ideology of the BAU, bourgeois society had to undergo a cure and be totally transformed. The old political parties, which had lost their influence, would be replaced by professional organizations of the peasants, workers, craftsmen and tradesmen, etc., and because the peasants formed the bulk of the population who engaged in physical labour, without which human society could not exist, they had the right to political hegemony in society. Thus, Stamboliyski expounded his theory of independent peasant power. According to Stamboliyski, peasant government would have as its aim to preserve

smallholding, particularly that of the peasants, to restrict big capital, to create a regime of republican political democracy, to implement the co-operative principle and to secure a general advance in agriculture and other sectors of the economy.

112 This strange and interesting theory could only emerge in an underdeveloped agricultural country. In its socio-economic essence it is utopian and reactionary. The attempt to halt the natural growth of capitalism which leads to the concentration of production was a wild dream. This does not mean, however, that the ideology of the BAU and the policy of its leader were wholly reactionary. On the contrary, Stamboliyski was an irreconcilable fighter against the monarchy and openly proclaimed his republican ideas. He used his entire stature as a politician against the totalitarian forces that were attempting to take the reins of government after the First World War and establish a terrorist regime. The BAU and Stamboliyski defended and saved bourgeois democracy in the most turbulent years of the post-war crisis. Under Stamboliyski's leadership, a series of reforms were introduced which alleviated the plight of the working people. Stamboliyski pursued a tranquil foreign policy which aimed to abolish the evil consequences of the Treaty of Neuilly and to lead Bulgaria out of her dangerous international isolation.

Of course, Stamboliyski had the weaknesses of every petty-bourgeois reformer. The great difficulties that Bulgaria was undergoing on the international front after the war baffled him and he was unable to realize his plans. Although a convinced republican, he did not dare to raise his hand against the monarchy, did not succeed in curbing the savage political habits of the day, nor in dealing radically with the fascist plots. His inconsistent policy undermined the foundations of the Agrarian Government, the BAU rapidly became corrupt and degenerated into a party with different and contradictory tendencies. All this made the task of the fascist plotters easier, and contributed to the success of the coup of June 9, 1923.

Stamboliyski was a complex and contradictory phenomenon in the political life of Bulgaria. He has prototypes in various countries, particularly in Eastern Europe. A study of his life and political ideology gives rise to extremely interesting conclusions about the character of petty-bourgeois régimes, reveals the historical aim of the attempts of the intermediate social classes to make their way to the top in society, and shows the complex and contradictory differentiation which took place in backward societies during the phase of developed capitalism.

Stamboliyski will always be regarded as a hero and martyr by Bulgarians — as one who suffered in the cause of the suffering peasants, as a great democrat and fighter for social justice, political equality and human dignity.

NIKOLAI GENCHEV

GEORGI DIMITROV

"Dimitrov was a flash of lightning
that remained for ever in the constant
movement of human light."

Paul Eluard

More than twenty years have passed since the time of Georgi Dimitrov's death, but he is still one of the most popular figures in the international workers and communist movement. What is the source of this fascination? How did he leave this great mark on our century which is so full of great events and great people? In order to answer this question, we must turn the pages of the biography of a personality whose fate has been connected with the history of the Bulgarian, Balkan and world workers' movement over the course of 50 years.

On July 2, 1949, another notable leader of the world communist movement, Palmiro Togliatti, wrote: "The passing of Georgi Dimitrov means the passing of one of the most intelligent and courageous leaders of the working class; one of those who left the deepest imprint on the history of the last decades; an exceptional person who combined the gifts of a Marxist theoretician, a brave fighter, an experienced politician and an untiring organizer."

The name of Georgi Dimitrov was known outside Bulgaria as early as the beginning of the century, when the young trade union leader's moral stature approached that of the leaders of the Balkan workers' movement,

Dimiter Blagoev and Georgi Kirkov. He was born on June 18, 1882 in the village of Kovachevtsi, near Rado-mir, and had to face life's hardships in his childhood. When he was 15 years old, and working as a type-setter, he enrolled in the Printing Workers' Union; three years later, his alert mind and organizational abilities led to his election as secretary of the Union. The young man avidly read Marxist literature. When he was twenty, he entered the Bulgarian Social-Democratic Party, and in 1903, he fought uncompromisingly for the break of the revolutionary social-democrats with the reformists. From 1904, Dimitrov was a member of the executive of the Bulgarian Trade Union, and in 1909, became its secretary. His selfless organizational work and participation in strikes, especially in the miners' and transport workers' strikes made him a favourite workers' tribune. From 1909 to the end of his life, Dimitrov was a member of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Workers' Social-Democratic Party (left-wing socialists) which was renamed the Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP) in 1919. In 1913, the electors showed their faith in his abilities to defend their interests in parliament, to which he was constantly re-elected until 1923.

During the First World War Dimitrov, together with the entire left-wing party, matured in an atmosphere of acute class struggles and emerged as a proletarian internationalist leader.

The ideas of the October Revolution found favourable soil in Bulgaria. During the transition of the world workers' movement from Social Democracy to Bolshevism, the Bulgarian communist movement quickly defined its position — that of unflinching Marxism-Leninism in the fight for the abolition of the society of exploitation. Georgi Dimitrov was one of the leaders of the Balkan Communist Federation, the headquarters of which was in Sofia. At the Third Congress of the Comintern (1921) Dimitrov established contact with the leaders of the World Communist Movement, and with Lenin himself, to whom he explained the perspectives of the revolutionary struggle in Bulgaria.

The period of the construction of a truly Marxist-Leninist party was a lengthy one, and accompanied by many difficulties and mistakes. In 1918, Bulgarian troops left the front and formed their own democratic republic, but because they were not given the support of the Communist Party, were defeated. During the rule of the Bulgarian Agrarian Union that followed, the Bulgarian Communist Party did not give decisive support to the new régime. When, on June 9, 1923, reactionary forces in Bulgaria toppled the Agrarian Government, the Bulgarian Communist Party continued to be neutral in the fight between "the left and the right wing of the bourgeoisie". After the coup, the Party immediately realized its mistake. Dimitrov led the new political course of action and wrote many articles in which he continued to support Lenin's policy of a united workers' front. The Bulgarian Communist Party and Dimitrov turned their backs on the misunderstandings and contradictions of the past and offered a brotherly hand to all oppressed people, to all antifascists. The antifascist uprising of 1923, one of the leaders of which was Georgi Dimitrov, did not succeed but, as its leaders said, ploughed a bloody furrow between the Bulgarian people and fascism. For his participation in the uprising and his activities abroad, Dimitrov was given two death sentences by default by the fascist court. After the uprising, together with the leadership of the Balkan Communist Federation, Dimitrov went to Vienna, and in a short time, had established himself in the leadership of the Comintern as an authority not only on the Balkans, but also on Austro-German questions. For this reason, from 1928, the year of the foundation of the West European Bureau of the Comintern, which had Berlin as its centre, he was a member and in 1929 became its head.

Georgi Dimitrov consistently pursued the policy of the Communist International in the Bureau of the Comintern, relying on the wide experience he had accumulated over the years of the development of the class and political struggles of Europe. He was one of those leaders of the international communist movement who

consistently pursued Lenin's policies as far as party leadership was concerned. At that time, representatives of the broadest anti-colonialist and anti-militarist forces all over the world formed the Anti-imperialist League. Georgi Dimitrov was soon included in the leadership of the League. His name appeared in appeals to human conscience signed by Henri Barbusse, Romain Rolland, Martin Andersen-Nexö, Theodore Dreiser, Albert Einstein, Paul Langevin, Bertrand Russel, Diego Rivera, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sukarno and Jomo Kenyatta, as well as many other representatives of world culture, science and politics. Until March, 1933, Dimitrov worked in Berlin and took an active part in the campaign against the rising fascist menace.

The name of Georgi Dimitrov is usually connected with the Reichstag Fire Trial and the fight of the workers and democratic forces against fascism. This is natural, for at Leipzig, where the trial was held in 1933, Dimitrov combined the fearlessness of the professional revolutionary with the brilliant culture of a Marxist-Leninist activist. This was the alloy from which the weapon that broke open the fascist prison and carried his words about co-operation in the general struggle against European fascism was forged.

Setting fire to the Reichstag was a monstrous provocation designed by Hitler and organized by Göring. The German Communist Party and the Communist International were accused of arson and the fire said to have been a signal for a communist revolution. The fascist dictatorship succeeded in destroying the German communist and workers' movement, but their plans concerning the outcome of the trial were not realized. They were thwarted by Dimitrov's brave and intelligent defence, and by the might of the world-wide movement to save the victims of German fascism.

Instead of being accused, Dimitrov became the accuser. Göbbels and Göring were helpless and ridiculous witnesses in his presence. At the end of the interrogation, Göring forgot that he was the second most important man in Germany after Hitler. He furiously threatened Dimitrov, just as a common criminal would, with

these words: "Be careful, watch out, I'll take care of you, just as soon as you leave the court! You skunk!" Dimitrov struck the hardest blow against the framed trial and against fascism in the final speech he made before the court. This speech made the Reichstag Fire Trial into one of the historic events of the 20th century. In it, Dimitrov defended the Communist International and pointed out that the people who had really set fire to the Reichstag were the German fascists themselves. Dimitrov also contemptuously dismissed the suggestions that he was "a suspicious Balkan personage and "a wild Bulgarian".

"A people that have lived for 500 years under foreign domination without losing their language and nationality, our working class and the peasants who fought and continue to fight against Bulgarian fascism and for communism, a people of this kind are not wild and barbarous. The only savages and barbarians in Bulgaria are the fascists. But I ask you, Mr President, in what country are fascists not savages and barbarians?"

Everyone in the court was amazed by the unheard-of audacity of the accused, who so bravely and strongly denounced fascism when confined in the lair of the beast itself. Dimitrov continued: "Long before the time when the German Emperor Karl V said that he spoke German only to his horses, and that the German courtiers and educated people wrote only in Latin, and were ashamed of the German language, in "barbarous Bulgaria", Cyril and Methodius had created and propagated the Old Bulgarian alphabet and literature. . . . I have no reason to be ashamed of being a Bulgarian, and I am proud that I am a son of the Bulgarian working class."

The Reichstag Fire Trial mobilized the workers' movement, which had died down during the time of the world economic crisis, and was in a state of disunity. It was not only the communists who fought to save the accused, but also many social-democrats, catholics, antifascists and pacifists, people with varying political and religious convictions who, for the first time, joined hands in action. The name of Dimitrov rang out at enthusiastic meetings on all five continents and mil-

lions of people searched their atlases to find tiny Bulgaria. If it was only the Reichstag Fire Trial that had figured in Dimitrov's biography, he would still have been a world-famous personality.

In February 1934, after their utter defeat at the Reichstag Fire Trial, Hitler and Göring were forced to free Dimitrov and his associates — the Bulgarian communists Vladimir Popov and Tanev. The Bulgarian government of that time refused to accept the three Bulgarians, but they were given Soviet citizenship and left for Moscow.

This was the time at which Europe was darkened by the shadow of the brown plague. Hitler began to prepare for war, and his anti-communist and anti-Soviet policies were encouraged by reactionary forces in various countries, by the largest world monopolies and some Western governments. This troubled time set the world workers' movement a number of new tasks and problems. While the leadership of the Comintern and Socintern had not then succeeded in overcoming the consequences of the long period of inner conflicts, the workers themselves were striving for unity. An evaluation of the development of the international communist movement shows that the new stage which was reached between 1934 and 1935 is most closely connected with the activities of Georgi Dimitrov. This stage was crowned by the decisions taken at the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, which overcame the left-wing sectarianism, so deeply embedded in the world communist movement, and again set the movement on the Leninist path.

During the summer of 1934, Dimitrov who had been chosen as chief speaker at the Seventh Congress, was preparing his theses. He strongly criticized many of the formulations of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern (1928) and of the following Plenary Sessions of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI); the evaluation of social democracy and social fascism, the accusations against the left-wing social-democrats, which described them as the most dangerous enemies of the workers' movement, the statement that

all communist parties and organizations were fascist, the rejection of all possible allies in the antifascist, anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggle. These new formulations provoked a great deal of argument. With the support of many members of the ECCI and the leadership of the French, Spanish and other communist parties, Georgi Dimitrov defended and firmly established the new course.

The Seventh Congress of the Comintern (1935) was a triumph of creative Marxism-Leninism. An important change had been brought about in the development of the world communist and workers' movement, and the man who had achieved this was Georgi Dimitrov, elected by the Congress as general secretary of the ECCI. In his report, Dimitrov analyzed the results of the world socio-economic development of imperialism and drew conclusions concerning the struggle of the communist parties and the workers' and democratic movements. The strategic line of immediate struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat was replaced by a policy of opposition against fascism, the war and the expansion of the big monopolies, a fight for democracy and peace. This struggle represented a new stage in the development of the world proletarian revolution in which, by the efforts of all the exploited classes and with the aid of the representatives of the petty-bourgeois and middle-bourgeois strata of the intelligentsia, democratic transformations both on a national and international scale were carried out. The practical expression of this idea was realized in the movement for people's fronts. The people's front had the task of resolving not only political problems, but also of devising a programme of social measures in defence of the workers and the lower and lower-middle classes against the might of the monopolies and the transformation of the state into their obedient puppets. The people's fronts in France and Spain won the battle with reaction and saved Europe from the rapid advance of fascism. The communist parties succeeded in overcoming the isolation imposed by the dogmatic sectarian formulations and headed a big movement in the defence of democracy and national independence.

The fascists, however, with the blessing of Great Britain, France and the United States, made feverish preparations for war and beneath the banner of anti-communism, destroyed the foundations of peace. The leaders of the great imperialist states, blinded by class hatred, and stressing the national interests of their countries, urged fascist Germany on to war with the Soviet Union. The Second World War put an end to the activities of the Communist International, but the Communist Parties were on a sound footing and withstood all the storms and trials. During the war, the communist movement not only avoided destruction, but expanded on an even bigger scale. The communists did not grudge their lives in the fight for national independence and the socialist reconstruction of society. The national liberation fronts, which were created with the active participation of the communist parties, contributed to the successes of the international proletarian revolution.

Dimitrov did a great deal in the working-out of a policy for these fronts. On his initiative, the Bureau of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party abroad, which he controlled, proposed to several democratic antifascist Bulgarian parties that a Fatherland Front should be created for the fight against monarcho-fascism, to save Bulgaria from a new national disaster. The BCP played a very important part in the guerrilla fighting that followed and suffered many casualties.

At the end of the Second World War, the victory of the socialist revolution in Bulgaria was an event which was quite natural, the result of the victory of the antifascist coalition, of the crisis of capitalism and monarcho-fascism and the scale of the antifascist struggle. The road to salvation was clear. The first step on this road was the victory of the Ninth of September Uprising of 1944.

In 1945, Dimitrov returned to his homeland after 22 years of exile, and became President of the Council of Ministers of the People's Republic of Bulgaria. By 1948, the Fatherland Front Government, headed by Dimitrov,

had succeeded in overcoming the postwar difficulties, and the problems of the transition from capitalism to socialism in Bulgaria with the active aid of the Soviet Union. The generally-acknowledged author of the reconstruction of Bulgarian society was the BCP, led by Georgi Dimitrov. A national-democratic system was established in Bulgaria which successfully realized the functions of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The theoretical foundations of the new system were developed by Georgi Dimitrov, who also controlled its practical implementation. In his report to the Fifth Congress of the BCP (1948), Dimitrov traced the historical development of the Bulgarian revolutionary workers' movement from the end of the last century to 1944 and drew conclusions about the experience gained in the building of socialism in Bulgaria. Due to the creative application of Marxism-Leninism, this experience was also closely studied by other European countries of the socialist system. The Fifth Congress, which was guided by the general laws of the development of the socialist system, opened up perspectives for the development of the People's Republic of Bulgaria in the years that followed. Dimitrov emphasized: "It is necessary, by means of the industrialization and electrification of the country and the mechanization of agriculture, to achieve in 15-20 years that which other countries, under different conditions, have achieved in centuries."

Georgi Dimitrov died on July 2, 1949. He was deeply mourned by the Bulgarian people and the international communist movement. The great French poet and friend of Bulgaria, Paul Eluard, says: "He was the voice of us all, only juster and louder."

Georgi Dimitrov wanted the new Bulgaria to be a country with a highly-developed industry and a modern, co-operative agricultural system. In the sphere of foreign policy, he left us wise principles of neighbourly relations and friendship with all the Balkan states, of eternal friendship with the Soviet Union and all socialist and peace-loving countries.

The years that were to come confirmed the prophecies of Georgi Dimitrov and exceeded even the boldest

plans of 1948 and 1949. The People's Republic of Bulgaria achieved immense successes economically, culturally and politically. Today, we remember the life and works of Georgi Dimitrov, his behests and the results of his planning, which have achieved new successes in the struggle for peace, democracy and socialism, with gratitude.

MILEN SEMKOV

VASSIL KOLAROV

"The Bulgarian people are fortunate that they possess a statesman who is so dedicated, so exceptionally able, with immense erudition and rich political experience."

Georgi Dimitrov

On July 16, 1877, at the time when Russian troops were crossing the Danube and the great battle for the liberation of Bulgaria was beginning, Vassil Kolarov, the great activist of the Bulgarian and international workers' movement, was born in Shoumen. He came of a family of craftsmen and inherited the alert spirit of his father, Peter Kolarov, and the great native intelligence of his mother, Stefania Ikonomova.

He developed an interest in things that were outside of his immediate environment at an extremely early age, together with the games he played in school. "When anyone happened to say," wrote Vassil Kolarov at a later date, "what he had heard from others or read somewhere, I felt that there was a wider world, and wanted to enter it..." This interest attracted him to books which gradually revealed the world he sought, but compelled him to think of many new things.

After the closure of the six-form Shoumen school because of the revolts of the schoolboys, Kolarov entered the Varna Gymnasium. During his days at the high school between 1891 and 1895, he developed a great interest in social questions. The school, however, could

not satisfy him. He sought the answer to his questions outside of the school, and found it for the first time in Dimiter Blagoev's book *What Is Socialism and Can It Develop in our Country?* For the young Kolarov, this book and the ones that followed from the *Bulgarian Socialist Library* series proved to be a true revelation and he immersed himself in reading. In this way, he became acquainted with *Colonialism*, by Jules Guesde, *May Day, the Yearly Day of the Workers of the World*, by G. Plekhanov, *The Religion of Capital* by Paul Lafargue and *Who Lives at Whose Expense* by Dieckstein.

The large number of popular expositions of the teaching of Marx and some of the original works of Marx and Engels, with which Kolarov became acquainted at the time, encouraged him to become one of the initiators of secret Marxist circles at the Gymnasium and the leader of such a group in his own class. Kolarov's enthusiasm for socialist ideas became even stronger under the direct influence of Dimiter Blagoev who visited Varna and spoke on socialism. Kolarov was one of the editors of the newspaper *Ouchenicheski Glas* which was published in Varna between 1894 and 1895.

As early as that time, the young Kolarov's wide interests attracted him to the arts. He played the violin, painted and carved wood. He read fiction and belles lettres avidly, particularly the works of Vazov, Konstantin Velichkov, Vassil Droumev, Zahari Stoyanov, Lyuben Karavelov, Botev and Slaveykov. His constant spiritual food was also the large number of translations from Pushkin, Turgenev, Lermontov, Tolstoy, Victor Hugo, Molière, Goethe and Schiller.

Vassil Kolarov graduated from the gymnasium with extremely good marks and in September, 1895, became a teacher at the three-form school in Nikopol. He took his first steps in life with a firm political position. "I wanted to enter practical life as soon as possible," he wrote at a later date, "to throw myself into the tempests of public life, to try my strength in the fight against what I considered to be evil, to be useful to the working people on whose side I had been since my schooldays. I also had faith in my strength, courage

and endurance. I believed that I would not allow myself to be crushed, that I would not sink into the mire of indifference, and that I would emerge victorious if I did not die too early."

When a young man takes his first steps in life with feelings such as these, and when the future has justified his brave youthful aspirations, he is able to declare with complete satisfaction at the end of his life, "And now, when I am already 70 years old, I feel happy, very happy, that I can now see clearly that which was the reason for my existence. . . ."

As a teacher in Nikopol, Vassil Kolarov associated with young, energetic teachers who were deeply interested in their work; he began to propagate his ideas fervently and systematically among them. It was here that he succeeded in attracting new members into the teachers' movement, to create a country teachers' association which supported the Marxist trend in the teachers' union. Kolarov also founded an evening school, a school library and a theatrical group. His fervent socialist propaganda was crowned with success; in 1897, he founded the social-democratic organization and became its secretary. At the same time, he was a contributor to the newspaper *Ouchitelsko Dvizheniyé*, which was published in Varna.

Having been dismissed for his socialist activities, Kolarov decided to go abroad and continue his education. He considered that the profession that could make him independent was law, and in 1897, enrolled as a student in Geneva. There, he made a detailed study of the classics of Marxism, became acquainted with the struggles of the West European social-democratic parties and became friends with Russian revolutionary emigrés, especially Plekhanov. He became one of the organizers of the international student Marxist group in Geneva, which included Bulgarians, Russians, Serbs, Italians, Frenchmen, Poles and Germans; at the same time he took an active part in the meetings and discussions of the Bulgarian and Russian students.

Even at that early period, Kolarov was a consistent revolutionary Marxist and led the campaign against va-

rious forms of opportunism in the European socialist movement. On his return to Bulgaria, he applied the experience he had accumulated in the struggle against the widespread opportunism that existed in the Bulgarian Workers' Social-Democratic Party (BWSDP). At a later date, Kolarov said of this period of ideological development that right from the beginning he was deeply agitated by the question of the victory of the dictatorship of the proletariat in a backward peasant country such as Bulgaria. This is what he had to say on this question: "According to the orthodox doctrine of Marxism as preached by Kautsky, the process that would take place would be the ruin of the smallholders and the creation of large estates as the economic basis of socialism in agriculture. This process really was taking place... but it was very slow. Would we really have to wait for capitalism to do this for the conditions for the establishment of socialism to be created? This question troubled us greatly... Lenin and the Bolsheviks came as a revelation to us when they solved the peasant problem and gave the answer — collectivization. "Kolarov's transformation into a Marxist-Leninist took place under the direct influence of Lenin and the historical experience of the Bolsheviks, with whom he later established his first contacts.

Having completed his university education, Kolarov returned to his native town of Shoumen in 1900; there, he engaged in a wide range of political and public activities. In 1902, he became secretary of the local party organization. The so-called Shoumen period (1902-1904) in Kolarov's activities coincides with the years in which the ideological and organizational rout of the right-wing opportunism of those who advocated the "common cause" in the ranks of the BWSDP, and the fight to strengthen it after the split of 1903 were taking place, all on the principles of revolutionary Marxism. He participated for the first time as a delegate to the 9th Congress of the BWSDP in Turnovo, taking the side of the Marxist group in the party and leading an active fight against the "common-causers". He made many speeches and wrote articles in *Rabotnicheski Vestnik* (The Work-

ers' Newspaper), (*Unity and Self-Criticism* and *The Party Crisis*), with which he attempted to clarify more fully the positions of the proletarian party in Bulgaria. Kolarov was a delegate to the Tenth Party Congress in Roussé in 1903, when he sanctioned the expulsion of the common-causers from the ranks of the party.

Kolarov's defence of revolutionary Marxist positions made an excellent impression on the Central Committee of the BWSDP (left-wing socialists), which decided to send him on party business to Plovdiv, a large industrial centre. He skilfully led the party organization and the professional workers' movement from the beginning of 1904 to 1919, developed into a great orator and mature politician. "The time I spent in Plovdiv," wrote Kolarov, "is the basic period of all that I have done for the workers' movement. I taught the workers of Plovdiv to fight, and I taught them socialism, and at the same time, I learnt from them." At the 12th Congress of the BWSDP (left-wing socialists) in 1905, he was elected as a member of the Central Committee of the Party, and from then until the end of his life was constantly re-elected. Kolarov took an active part in the struggle for the improvement of conditions for the Plovdiv proletariat. His efforts at unifying the tobacco-workers' unions in Plovdiv and the rest of the country brought about the creation of the Union of Tobacco Industry Workers in 1908. He was a fiery orator at workers' meetings, the organizer of courses on Marxism and the theory of the trade union and co-operative movement, and gave lectures in the Party House. At the same time, together with Blagoev and the other leaders of the "narrow" (left-wing) socialist party, he exposed the opponents of the Party and passionately defended the ideological and organizational principles. In some of his articles such as *A Maximum Programme and Opportunism*, *Should Our Trade Unions Be Neutral?* and *The Party Press*, he tore the demands of the "wide" (right-wing) socialists for trade union neutrality to pieces; he defended the principle of democratic centralism and party discipline from the opposition of the anarchist liberals.

During this period, Kolarov also fulfilled his duty

as a participant in many international socialist congresses and conferences in a way worthy of praise; these included the Stuttgart Congress of 1907, Copenhagen (1910) Zimmerwald (1915), Stockholm (1917). At the Stuttgart Congress of the Second International, as a member of the BWSDP (left-wing socialists) delegation, he made a speech against the advocates of trade union neutrality and, together with his compatriots, voted for the amendment to the congress resolution *On Militarism and International Conflicts* put forward by Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg. At the international socialist congress in Copenhagen, on behalf of the party of the left-wing socialists Kolarov decisively rejected the proposal of the opportunist leadership of the Second International for the unification of the party with the right-wing socialists. He also took part in the work of the First (1909) and Second (1915) Balkan Social-Democratic Conferences.

As a representative of the BWSDP (left-wing socialists) at the international conference of the socialist internationalists, which took place in September, 1915 at Zimmerwald, Kolarov first became acquainted with Lenin and established contact with him. At the conference of the leftist Zimmerwaldists in Stockholm in 1917, together with Georgi Kirkov, he took the side of the Zimmerwald left-wing. The great experience that he accumulated as a participant in these international conferences proved to be most valuable for his development and particularly for his work in the leadership of the Communist International after 1922.

In 1917, together with the entire party of left-wing socialists, Vassil Kolarov joyfully celebrated the news of the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution. He made many speeches, wrote articles, reports and pamphlets in which he emphasized the importance of the revolution in world history. His pamphlet *Bolshevik Russia*, which was published on March 22, 1919, was the first original work dedicated to the October Revolution to be published in Bulgaria, in which an attempt at a complete and systematic explanation of the essence of the new Soviet power was made from a Marxist standpoint.

At the First Congress of the Bulgarian Communist Party (left-wing socialists) of May, 1919, Kolarov read a report on the country's internal and international situation, in which he wrote: "Socialism is no longer theoretical; it has become a practical, immediate task for the proletariat and working masses. The Russian people have also shown the Bulgarian people the way to socialism." At the same congress, he was elected as secretary of the Central Committee, and remained in this post until his election as general secretary of the Comintern in 1922. Over these few years, the Bulgarian Communist Party (left-wing socialists) took important decisions and took its first decisive steps to Bolshevization. Some of the practical steps taken by the Party to reach an agreement with the Agrarian government and the BAU for a battle against the rising danger of fascism in Bulgaria are connected with Kolarov's name.

Vassil Kolarov led the Bulgarian Communist Party (left-wing socialists) delegation to the 3rd Congress of the Comintern in 1921 and took an active part in its work. He was elected as a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist International. At the 4th Congress of the BCP (left-wing socialists), which took place in 1922, he read a report on the tactics of the united front devised by Lenin and adopted by the Congress of the Comintern, which was also adopted by our party. An expression of the high opinion that the most eminent figures in the various communist parties, and even Lenin himself, had of Kolarov was his election as general secretary of the ECCI (see above) at the 4th Congress of the Comintern (November-December, 1922). He remained in this post until 1924, after which he was an ordinary member of the ECCI until 1943; he continued to work for the international workers' and communist movement, but concentrated his efforts on directing the Bulgarian Communist Party (left-wing socialists).

Vassil Kolarov most clearly emerges as a revolutionary Marxist and Leninist during the armed September Uprising of 1923 in Bulgaria. As early as 1919, on his recommendation the BCP (left-wing socialists) founded its own military organization and intelligence service,

due to which the Party was able to prepare its members for a decisive struggle against the fascist menace.

The fact that the coup had been allowed to take place led to a crisis, the surmounting of which is very largely due to the personal intervention of Kolarov. He understood the substance of the coup, and on June 11, 1923, in his article *The Coup in Bulgaria* (published in the newspaper *Pravda*) and in a telegram sent to the Central Committee of the BCP (left-wing socialists), he recommended that swift and decisive measures should be taken jointly with Alexander Stamboliyski. Kolarov came secretly to Bulgaria and immediately established contact with the Central Committee. In a resolution put forward by him and adopted at the session of the Central Committee of August 5-7, 1923, the necessity of preparing for a mass armed uprising to topple the coup-leaders from power was clearly emphasized. "The coup of June 9," the resolution reads, "produced a crisis as far as the question of power is concerned, the solution to which can be none other than an armed mass uprising in the name of the worker-peasant government."

The transition of the Central Committee from a position of neutrality to a policy of active revolutionary operations proved to be a complicated process, and in this case, Kolarov's strong arguments played an important role. He prepared the texts for the proposal for actions in conjunction with the BAU, the instruction to the party committees in which the new relationship which existed between the Party and the BAU was explained, and together with Todor Petrov, also formulated the proposition to the right-wing socialist party. The BCP's orientation towards a united struggle, which was expressed in these documents and concrete proposals, were developed and argued in Georgi Dimitrov's articles about a united front and printed in the Party organ *Rabotnicheski Vestnik*.

Vassil Kolarov, Georgi Dimitrov and Gavril Genov headed the glorious September Uprising and controlled all its operations. The defeat of the uprising forced Kolarov and Dimitrov to emigrate to Yugoslavia, Austria and the Soviet Union. From Vienna, they sent their

Open Letter to the Workers and Peasants of Bulgaria, which brought confidence into the party ranks and played an important part in the restoration of the Party. Being emigrés, the two party leaders carried on a stubborn campaign in the defence of the September tactics of the BCP (left-wing socialists). Soon after their arrival in Moscow, Kolarov wrote in the newspaper *Trudovaja Kopeika*: "We have been beaten, but we have not been defeated. The events of September are only an episode in the revolutionary struggle of the workers and peasants in Bulgaria. September is our July, and it will be our October."

Vassil Kolarov read a report to the Fifth Congress of the Comintern in 1924 on the basis of which the decision was taken that use of the experience of the September Uprising should be made by the communist parties in the process of bolshevization. He dedicated a number of articles and sketches to the September Uprising and painted pictures depicting it. In the conditions existing after the defeat of the September Uprising, which were exceptionally difficult for the Party, Kolarov, as a member of the Agency of the BCP abroad, together with Georgi Dimitrov made great efforts to secure a reliable leadership for the country's revolutionary struggles. In this respect, the Party's theoretical organ, *Komounistichesko Znamé*, which was published abroad, and edited by Kolarov from 1926 to 1929, played an extremely important role.

During this period, Kolarov took part in the work of the Moscow meeting of the Party of 1925 with a basic report, also in that of the Vienna Plenary Session of the Central Committee in 1926 and the Second Party Conference in Berlin at the end of 1927, all of which took place under extremely trying conditions but played an important role in the restoration and strengthening of the Party, binding it to the working masses. For his revolutionary activities during the September Uprising and afterwards, Kolarov was given several sentences in Bulgaria — two 15-year sentences for his part in the uprising, and a death sentence by default for his activities in the Agency of the BCP abroad.

During the years he spent abroad, Kolarov also played an important role in the campaign to win the peasants over to the side of the proletariat in the revolutionary struggle. At the 10th Plenary Session of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (July 1929) he defended Lenin's stand on the peasant question, and in 1930, he was given the task of directing this Committee's department for work in the villages. At the same time he was director of the International Agrarian Institute in Moscow, and directed its scientific organ, the periodical *Agrarni Problemi*. While occupying these important posts, Kolarov wrote a number of reports, articles and pamphlets in which he made important contributions to the theoretical and practical development of agrarian questions. In 1935, he was made Doctor of Economic Sciences for his work in this field.

During the Reichstag Fire Trial of 1933, Kolarov made tremendous efforts to organize an international defence for Georgi Dimitrov.

He helped to devise the plan for the international political campaign connected with the trial, travelled to London and Paris, met the leaders of progressive movements and organizations, made speeches, and wrote articles in which he exposed the nazi provocation.

As a communist who belonged to the Bolshevik group in the BCP, Kolarov also played a significant part in the Party's struggles to overcome left-wing sectarianism. In 1935, he was a BCP delegate to the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, expressed his opinion on Dimitrov's report and was elected a member of the Praesidium of the Executive Committee of the Communist International. He was among those who headed the campaign for the exposure of international and Bulgarian fascism and worked for the creation of a national antifascist front and the abolition of the fascist dictatorship. Together with Georgi Dimitrov, he devised concrete tasks aimed at bringing about a decisive change in the policy of the BCP. His articles and reports on this question were published in the Soviet Union in Bulgarian and illegally distributed in Bulga-

ria. His report entitled *For a Decisive Change in the BCP*, which was read to the Bulgarian political emigrés in Moscow in 1935 is a serious and well argued criticism of the misguided left-wing sectarian course and the necessity of a change in the tactics of the Party.

Vassil Kolarov was one of the leaders of the anti-fascist struggle of the Bulgarian people during the hard years of the Second World War. The commentaries he gave on Moscow Radio, his passionate appeals to all workers in Bulgaria for the expansion of the partisan movement and the strengthening of Bulgaro-Soviet friendship, the large number of articles, reports and speeches read over the outlawed Hristo Botev radio station all aided the Party and workers in Bulgaria. He was also one of the authors of the 1942 programme of the Fatherland Front.

After the victory of the socialist revolution on September 9, 1944, Vassil Kolarov took his place in the leadership of the state and public life of his country. As a member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Party and the National Committee of the Fatherland Front, he defended the revolution in speeches and articles and made valuable recommendations for the organization of the new people's democratic state even before his return to Bulgaria. His historical study *The Bulgarian People in Fight for a New Bulgaria*, printed for the first time in Russian in the periodical *Oktyabr*, and published in Bulgarian in August, 1945, played a very important part as far as this was concerned.

On September 9, 1945, he returned to his homeland, was given a warm welcome by his people and put all his energy, his wide political experience and knowledge into the construction of the new Bulgaria. "After 22 years of forced exile," said Kolarov, "I am glad that I stand face to face with a young generation that bears the flame of progress, serves its people faithfully and is ready for any sacrifice for the good of the people."

During this last period of his life, Kolarov's active participation in the discussion of many questions affecting our socialist development, in the campaign to secure

the independence and territorial integrity of his country and the drafting of the new socialist constitution are particularly notable. He was given the difficult and responsible task of defending Bulgaria's interests at the Paris Peace Conference of 1946. Before that, when he was leader of the Interparliamentary Conference at Copenhagen (April 25, 1946), he headed an energetic campaign to dispel the anti-Bulgarian feelings that had been created by prejudiced people. This cause was also aided by the many meetings he had with political leaders in various countries and with journalists from all over the world in Copenhagen and after that, before and during the Paris Peace Conference. His personal prestige made possible his meetings with Byrnes and Bevin, the leaders of American and British foreign policy. These meetings and conversations and the large number of articles that he wrote aided the mutual elucidation of the viewpoints of the governments on questions on which an understanding had not been reached until then. Kolarov made his main defence of Bulgaria's national interests at the political and territorial commission of the Paris Conference, where he made a speech of historical importance.

During the years of people's power, Vassil Kolarov occupied responsible party and state posts; he was a member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chairman of the Great National Assembly of the Republic, and Vice-president and President of the Council of Ministers; he gave loyal and selfless service to the socialist construction of his country.

He died after a serious illness on January 23, 1950.

Our portrait of Vassil Kolarov as a politician and person would be incomplete if we did not mention his wide scientific and cultural interests. His many scientific works printed in periodicals, newspapers, pamphlets and given in the form of university lectures are a model of conscientious scientific and socio-publicistic activity. An example of this is his scientific explanation of the three wars, of the agrarian and other crises, and of the historical development of the Bulgarian socialist

movement. His works were published in 48 volumes in Bulgaria and, together with the pamphlets, the total number exceeds 770,000. The recognition given to his scientific activities was his election as a member of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences on July 21, 1946.

Kolarov is a striking example of a highly-educated and gifted politician who applied his social and personal vocation in all spheres of life. He devoted his energy and abilities to the service of the communist ideal and the well-being of his people. The words that he spoke on July 16, 1947 on the occasion of his 70th birthday and decoration with the Order of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, are a valuable behest for future generations and a balance-sheet of his active life: "Over the course of my long life, and long years of social struggle, I have always been guided by two things: the first is my deep conviction of the necessity and inevitability of changing the wicked capitalist system and replacing it with another, just system. This is the first thing that lighted my path as a public activist and fighter in all campaigns that I have taken part in. The second thing, which is no less important, is that I have always looked to the masses, sought contact with them, tried to understand their motive force, what they live by and what hurts them. And I have always believed in the uncrushable strength of the masses. The whole of my activity has been founded on the belief that the people, and only the people, organized, educated and properly led, are able to bring about this new society of true freedom and national prosperity, which has always been my ideal.'

GEORGI NAOUMOV

SOME GREAT BULGARIANS

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